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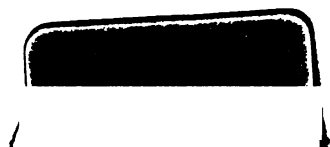
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LECTURES
TO
WORKING MEN
BY
HUGH STOWELL BROWN.





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CONTENTS.

FIRST SERIES.

	PAGE
1.—“I CAN'T AFFORD IT.”	3
2.—“THE ENGLISH OF IT.”	17
3.—“THE UPPER AND THE LOWER CLASSES.”	29
4.—“THERE IS A LION IN THE WAY.”	43
5.—“STRAINING OUT GNATS AND SWALLOWING CAMELS.” ...	57
6.—“THE ENGLISHMAN'S HOUSE IS HIS CASTLE.”	71
7.—“I CAN'T HELP IT.”	85
8.—“I DON'T CARE.”	99
9.—“I CAN'T SEE IT.”	113
10.—“DO THYSELF NO HARM.”	127

SECOND SERIES.

1.—“LUCK.”	3
2.—“NEVER DESPAIR.”	17
3.—“THE BUSYBODY.”	31
4.—“FAIR PLAY.”	45
5.—“AND WHEN HE CAME TO HIMSELF”	59
6.—“KEEP TO THE RIGHT.”	73
7.—“BE MERRY AND WISE.”	87
8.—“GOD'S POOR AND THE DEVIL'S POOR.”	101
9.—“MOVE ON !”	115
10.—“PLUCK.”	129

“I CAN'T AFFORD IT!”

SHALL I tell you what it was that suggested to me the subject and title of this address? A few weeks ago I sat on the top of an omnibus which conveyed me through two or three miles of the most crowded streets in the town. It was evening, and the shops were lighted up; and, from my exalted position, I could see into them. But I saw, what was nothing new either in fact or to my observation, that the drinking shops, far more numerous than those of any other sort, were likewise far more crowded than those of any other sort. In a baker's shop, a butcher's, or a greengrocer's, there might be two or three people, and, in a barber's, one customer getting shaved and another waiting for his turn; but in most cases the gin shop and the beer shop were full from one end of the counter to the other, sometimes in ranks two or three deep; and some were coming out and others going in; to serve them all seemed to be as much as the people behind the counter could do. Altogether the trade was very brisk, although every body says there's nothing doing, and that the times are very bad. As I saw all this going on, not in one case or in two, but at almost every street corner, right and left, for miles, I said to myself "I don't know how it is with these fellows, they ought to be uncommonly well off, but, as for myself, to put it on no higher ground, 'I can't afford it.'" Yet, very well off, I could not

but know that the men—and, I am sorry to say I must add the women—who thronged the drinking shops, certainly were not. The garments of many of them, the general appearance of them all, gave testimony to the contrary, and showed that they were poor or poorish folks; and so I concluded that they could afford such doings and such drinkings no better than myself.

Well, that little bit of town travelling suggested the present address. There are many things which we can't afford, and it is well for us to know and to consider what those things are, and to be very firm in resisting all temptation to indulge in them,—to stand like rocks on this fact, "We can't afford them."

And, first of all, I may perhaps add a few words to what I have already said upon the particular luxury, if luxury it can be called, which has suggested this subject. The frequenting of the drinking shops is a habit too expensive for most men,—too expensive especially for those whom we usually mean and understand by the term working men. A working man's wages range, let us say, from 18s. to £2 per week, and he is an uncommonly lucky fellow if he get work and wages every week all the year round. In very many instances he is out of work and does not earn a copper for periods of 12, or even 20 weeks at a time. He is, I suppose, in most instances, a married man; which is quite right. Every man who can support a wife ought to be married, and the man who can't support a wife ought to be ashamed of himself; and the probability is that our working man has not only a wife, but also several children. Now when such a man thinks of the claims his family has upon him, and considers all the chances and more than chances,—the stubborn and unwelcome fact of bad times and uncertainty and scarcity of work,—the possibility of illness and disablement,—

the ordinary expenditure that goes on always, and the extra expenditure that is often needed,—I am sure he will find that he never can have much to spare, provided he does his duty towards those who are dependent upon him. I waive all discussion of the expediency of total abstinence. Our working man may be able to afford a glass of beer now and then, perhaps every day, but he will have to be very moderate in such indulgence if all rightful claims are to be met, and all prudent provision for a rainy day (and there are many rainy days) is to be made. Any how, the habit of frequenting the drinking-shop is beyond his means; and, when tempted either by a desire for drink or by his companions to enter its doors, he is wise if, carefully counting the cost, he has the resolution to say to himself and the courage to say to his companions—“No! I can’t afford it.” More, however, much more than the money question, is involved in this habit of frequenting the drink-shops. Suppose that, so far as money is concerned, I could afford it (though I do not think that the richest man in the world is justified in being wasteful), there comes in this question—“Can I afford to get muddled in mind?” which is the pretty certain consequence of this evil habit. “When the wine is in the wit is out,” and most of us have so very little wit to spare that we can’t afford to lose it, or any fraction of it, even for five minutes. Our brains are never too clear or too strong, so as to permit of our having them clouded or weakened. All the sense that the most sensible man amongst us has is none too much for his need. We can’t afford to degrade ourselves from men into beasts, or into anything approaching the condition or the character of beasts. We can’t afford, even once in a life-time, to turn ourselves into stark fools. If my pocket could afford it, my brains cannot.

Another thought suggested by this expensive and foolish

practice is, that I cannot afford to have a head-ache, or to make myself ill in any way. For the sake of my happiness and for the sake of my work, I want all the health I can get. Head-aches enough, illnesses enough, come to most people, however sober and careful they are ; the strongest constitution is not at all too strong ; it has no vigour to spare for intemperance or any other kind of vice. I wish to live ; I wish to live as long as I can ; and I wish to live as long as I can in health and strength and happiness. And therefore, whether I think of my pocket, my brains, or my health, I say of the drink shop that it is a place to which I can't afford to go.

Another thing which it would be well for every man to think of and always bear in mind is—that he cannot afford to run the risk of losing his employment. Drinking habits and idle habits expose men to this risk ; when they lose time from their work in the worship of St. Monday ; when, in their work, they show neither diligence nor skill, nor any disposition to excel ; when they don't do all they can to make themselves of value to the employer, so that he shall feel that he can't afford to lose them. If you are such a poor creature, one so little to be depended upon and so incompetent to work, that the merchant, the shop-keeper, the manufacturer, can pick up as good a man as you anywhere in the street, it is very certain you can never be independent ; or, at most, you can be independent only in those rare and short times of very active trade when employers are glad to get hold of anybody. The source of the working man's independence is this, that the employer be not altogether independent of him ; and I say that a working man cannot afford any other position, and therefore cannot afford to be less efficient, less diligent, less trustworthy, than it is in his power to be ; he can't afford to make the worst of himself, he can afford only to make of himself the very best he can.

It is only "the stone that is fit for the wall that is not left in the way;" but if you are not fit for the wall, there is nothing for it but this—that in the way you should be made a paving-stone, to be trampled upon and rolled upon, and ground to dust. Again I say, my friend, whatever your abilities, you cannot afford to live beneath them; you cannot afford the indolence and self-indulgence which would prevent your putting forth to the uttermost your powers of work.

There are many people who, through one form of self-indulgence and another, live up to or beyond their means, and who much need to learn how to say, when to say, and with reference to what to say—"I can't afford it." Not in drinking alone, but also in eating, in clothing, in furnishing, in seeking amusement, in their general style and scale of living, they set all prudence and common sense at naught. Now I think this is a good rule—that what we can't afford, and well afford to pay for, we can't afford to have. And so, with regard to many things which it would perhaps be very agreeable to have, we should be manly enough to practice self-denial. Instead of allowing our imagination to dwell upon the many things, and fine things, and costly things we should like to possess, it will be wiser for most of us to form the habit of thinking of how few things, plain things, and cheap things (though not so cheap as to be nasty) we can manage to do with. Very often, if people see their neighbours, and especially neighbours whose means and station in life are much the same as their own, coming out grandly in dress or in anything else, they must needs imitate them, vie with them, and excel them at any cost. Now this is a great weakness,—that a man should be afraid or ashamed of wearing a shabbier coat than his fellow workman or fellow clerk wears. I think we ought to admire the pluck of the man who dares to wear a thread-bare garment in the

midst of a generation of stuck-up and got-up coxcombs who owe all that is fine about them to the tailor ; and if you dare not do that when your means tell you that you can't well afford to do otherwise, you are both a fool and a coward. Living on a scale too large for their means is one of the commonest mistakes made by people in these times. It is a mistake found in all classes of society. It leads to much lying, much anxiety, much misery, much dishonour. It causes many a man "to go up like a rocket and come down like the stick;" it almost compels hypocrisy ; it often sends the bailiffs into the house ; and sometimes drives a man mad to the blowing out of his brains, if he have any. Great is the wretchedness which would be avoided, great the peace of mind that would be secured, if we exercised ourselves more in the art of contentment,—practised hardy and frugal habits,—became more independent of what other people may think or say about us,—broke ourselves free from the tyranny of fashion, and learned to repel every temptation to extravagance with a stern, unyielding, obstinate—"I can't afford it."

From the number of cases, and distressing cases, I have met with, I should think it is a very common practice for men to become security for one another ; and a very common result of such a practice that the security is called for, and the guarantor reduced to want. I am sure that I have no wish to discourage friendliness amongst neighbours ; and I greatly honour and admire the spirit in which a man of kindly feeling gives his name to a bond, with the intention and in the hope of getting some poor fellow out of a mess. I have reason to suppose that this is often done in the purest spirit of neighbourly regard. But a man, especially if he have a wife and family, really ought to pause and consider whether he can afford it. He should, while hoping for the best, always consider the possibility of the

worst ; and, unless he can afford to lose the amount to which he commits himself, it is his wisdom for himself and his duty towards his family to decline. There are luxuries of benevolence as well as luxuries of selfishness which we are not able to afford. Solomon reminds us that "he that hateth suretyship is sure."

I often see men spend their leisure time in a very useless and foolish way ; and, when I see them acting so, I say to myself, however it may be with them, "I can't afford it." There they are ; they work, I was going to say all day, but that's nonsense ; hardly anybody works all day,—least of all does a working man work all day ; possibly his employer does, but he does not. Some eight or ten hours, it may be, are given to work ; and, excepting in a few instances, our friends are not very greatly tired by it. There really is no demand for the pity with which some regard the toiling millions ; the toiling millions will take very good care of themselves ; I don't blame them for it ; they won't kill themselves with toil. The other day, in Glasgow, I was standing near a very large building on which some hundreds of masons, bricklayers, carpenters, and labourers were employed. The dinner bell rang. If a fire had broken out in the place, or if an earthquake had shaken the walls, the fellows could not have scampered away more actively or more rapidly. They ran, they jumped, they leaped over palings and gates, down hill in this direction, up hill in that, I should say at the rate of twelve miles an hour. It was quite right ; I was glad to see that their work agreed with them, and hoped their dinners would agree with them as well. And so everywhere, when our toiling millions leave their shops, whether at dinner time or at the close of the day, they have plenty of energy left in them ; as a rule, their work is just so much good, healthy, and sometimes very gentle exercise. Most of our men, and our young men especially, whether in offices or shops, have leisure at their

command, and neither need that leisure for rest nor spend it in rest. I am not going to say what many of them spend it in ; but I think there are not a few who spend it very idly, and to no good purpose. And I don't think it can be said that they are so well informed, that their heads are so full of knowledge, that they need gather and learn no more. There are a few things, and a few useful things, of which most of them are ignorant. Perhaps in spelling some of them would be bothered by simpler words than "unparalleled," which, I believe, Mr. Robt. Lowe said would be written incorrectly by most of the Members of Parliament; perhaps they have an idea of Geography not much clearer than that of a London engine-fitter who told me, with the utmost confidence, that on going down the Thames you found the Isle of Wight immediately on your right hand, and the Isle of Man immediately on your left; and added that, whatever I might say to the contrary, he had seen them both in those positions. Or, it may be, that my friends who can find nothing but some so-called amusement to occupy their time, are about as well versed in Natural Philosophy as the mechanic who, when asked what a vacuum was, confessed that he was not quite sure, but believed it was something that they pumped out of a pipe. Now, of all things we possess there are few of which we can so ill afford to be wasteful as time. We have a common saying of this sort—"making up lost time." I hardly think that it can be made up in any case. Sufficient for each portion of time is its own rightful occupation. At all events, it is a thousand pities that, with the time afforded through moderate hours of labour and the opportunities furnished by a cheap press, by free libraries, by evening classes, and by various other institutions,—so many, through their idleness, or through a strong preference for amusements for the most part silly, and in some cases very;

unwholesome, should continue in a state of gross ignorance ; affording to the question—"What is a vacuum?"—a better answer than that just quoted, for the answer might often be "My hat, when my head is in it." Again I say, I, for one, cannot afford to squander time ; and I believe that you need very little reflection to convince you that you can't afford such squandering either. Let us all redeem it ; buy it up at any cost of effort, make the most of it, turn it to profit for our improvement in all, wherein we are aware of great deficiency. We can't afford to lose time, because we thus deprive ourselves of so much good as time, wisely spent, would yield us ; and there is another reason why we can't afford waste of this sort, and that is the probability, if not the certainty, that in doing nothing we shall be doing ill ; that the time not spent in improvement will be spent in injuring ourselves and others ; for "an idle brain is the devil's workshop," and "if the devil finds a man idle he sets him to work." Of course I don't expect, and I am sure I don't desire to see men forego every kind of amusement, though I believe that even amusement, of the better sort, is to be had very largely in intellectual exercise ; but amusement should only be a means to an end, that end being health and recreation. To make it the one great object of pursuit that shall fill up all leisure time is a stupid mistake, and a mistake which defeats itself ; for amusement is all the more gratifying by reason of its being sparingly partaken of. To go and spend hour after hour, and evening after evening, in watching the foolish and ugly antics of fellows who have blackened their faces (I think it would be only a fitting retribution if, choosing such a complexion, it were made permanent), and listening to their silly songs and conversations,—so to spend time, I shall not mention other ways a thousand times worse, is, to say the least, unwise. We, none

of us, have too much time for our life work if we understand what our life work is. In regard to time we are all persons of extremely limited means, and therefore ought to be sparing and economical, seeing that for every hour we get an hour's worth of something worth having. And so, if friends and companions entice you to spend time unprofitably, consent not; think of the value of the article, and say "I can't afford to part with it."

A sensible man will feel that he can't afford to quarrel with anybody, that, at all events, the cases in which he can afford to do so are very rare. That is a great rule of wisdom as well as of charity which we read in the Bible—"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." It is not always possible, for there are some cantankerous, ill-conditioned, nine-cornered people who, if you won't quarrel with them will quarrel with you just for that very reason. The best plan however, in regard to people of that sort, is not to live with them at all if you can help it, but give them a very wide berth. It would have been a wonderful saving to some men if, before entering into domestic or social strife, or before committing themselves to a law-suit, they had sat down and coolly counted the cost, so far as they could; for to count it all beforehand is impossible; no man when he goes into a row, great or small, can tell what it will cost him before he comes out of it. To some people's crooked natures, quarrelling may be a luxury; but it is horribly expensive. If it take the form of a law-suit, it is likely to be pretty smartly expensive in money; the revenge, if you get it, may be very sweet, and so it ought to be, for it is sure to be very dear. If the quarrel take some other form than that of a law-suit, though it may not cost money, it will be expensive in other ways. In many instances of the rougher sort, it costs a man or a woman a pair of black-

eyes. In other cases it costs much bad feeling and very bad words ; and sulkiness, and cross-looks, and discomfort generally. Altogether this game of quarrelling is, in most instances, not worth the candle, if there were nothing worse to say of it. More especially, husbands and wives can't afford to quarrel ; and if they do venture on such a luxury, the husband is likely to come off second-best, and is, on all accounts, the greater simpleton of the two. It is of great importance that we should have as much as possible of a peaceful state of mind, and in this world we are sure to meet with quite enough to disturb, to annoy, to vex, to try our temper ; quite enough of all that will turn up without our seeking it. Again I say—"If it be possible, as much as lieth in us, let us live peaceably with all men," for we can't afford to quarrel.

Another thing which a right-minded man must feel is this, —that he can't afford to lose his character ; that he can't afford to be anything, say anything, or do anything that would tend to damage his character ; for between a character altogether lost and one thoroughly established in every man's confidence and esteem there are many degrees. There are not only lost characters ; there are also, as in some measure distinct from them, broken characters, and shaky characters, and doubtful characters, and characters at which, when brought up in conversation, men shrug their shoulders, give you a meaning look, and say nothing. Character is a very precious thing ; and there are envious and malignant people in the world only too ready to pick holes in it, and to destroy it if they can. Therefore, mind first to get it, and then to keep it : a character for sobriety, a character for truthfulness, a character for diligence, a character for punctuality, a character for moral courage, a character that can, in all respects, be trusted and honoured. Get such a character at any cost and part with it at none.

"A good name is better than riches;" it is beyond all price; you can't afford to lose the smallest bit of it.

Once more; least of all, last of all, can I afford to lose or to endanger my soul and its eternal interests. Let every one of us reflect upon these wise words spoken by our Saviour,— "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" And if even such gain would be a loss, how then when all that a man gains, all that he gets in exchange for his soul's eternal salvation and happiness is only some brief pleasure of vice that leaves remorse and misery behind it, and, perhaps, sinks a man in poverty and shame, and sends him to an early grave. No! this is what I can't afford; what, my friend, you can't afford either. For your soul and for mine, the world, the flesh, and the devil may bid high; but they never can bid high enough; and if the tempter were to say, and if he could keep his word, and, pointing to all the kingdoms of the world, made the offer—"all these things will I give thee," on the condition "if thou wilt fall down and worship me," our wisdom would be, in the conviction that we can't afford to strike the bargain, to say "get thee behind me, Satan." And yet there are poor blockheads by the thousand who sell their souls for drink or for lust. There is a queer old proverb to this effect, "how ugly you look, as death said to the man who had cut his throat;" and, in a similar jeering manner, Sin and Satan turn round upon the stupid wretch who, having sold himself to vice, is ruined by it. Rely upon it we can't afford to lose our souls, and therefore can't afford to sin, for through sin the soul is lost; and can't afford to reject the good news by which we are told to believe in Jesus, for by such believing the soul is saved.

Such were some of the thoughts suggested by what I saw as I rode on the top of the omnibus on the occasion to which I

referred at the beginning of this address. These thoughts I leave with you, in the hope that they are conformable with sound sense, and capable of doing good in showing us all some of the things which, if we know our own interest, we shall feel that "we can't afford."

“THE ENGLISH OF IT.”

THE use, the very common use, of this expression is just one out of a thousand evidences that might be mentioned of the Englishman's very good opinion of himself, of his perfect satisfaction with his own character, of his serene conviction and thankful assurance that he is not as other men,—that, in one important moral property at all events, he is greatly superior to all the rest of the world. For what does this expression mean, or, to speak more carefully, what do we intend it to mean when we use it? Whatever the *it* may stand for when we say “the English of it,” we wish to convey the idea that “the English of it” is the truth of it,—the plain, simple, straightforward, blunt, out-spoken, unvarnished, and unadorned “truth of it.” Now the phrase in question indicates the Englishman's belief that it is the proud distinction of his noble self and of his noble race to love the truth, to speak the truth, and to abhor and shun all falsehoods, shams, unrealities, and humbugs. “The Irish of it” may be this, “the Scotch of it” that; “the French of it” one thing, “the Italian of it” another; in all these ways of saying or doing a thing there is more or less of prevarication, of equivocation, of dissimulation, of hypocrisy, of pretence, of make believe, and many other bad things; but “the English of it” is all veracity, candour, frankness, ingenuousness, and everything else that is good. I do not know whether the

Englishman stands quite as high as all this in the estimation of those whose superior he believes and declares himself to be. We have now and then heard of "perfidious Albion." Anyhow, it may be well for us to bear in mind the sensible words of Solomon—"Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips." If "the English of it" were a phrase of foreign invention, if it had originated in a deep and strong impression made by English character upon the minds of Dutchmen, Germans, Spaniards, Greeks, or other foreigners, I think it would have great value; but being, as I have reason to suppose, a purely native expression, we must take off it the discount due to our self-love, and to that proverbial blindness to their own faults from which Englishmen can boast no exemption.

Let us hope that "the English of it" is a phrase of which we are not altogether unworthy; let us try to make ourselves ever more and more worthy of it; but there are good many facts that rather tell against us, and show that we take rather too much for granted when we assume that "the English of it" and the truth of it are one and the same thing. It is possible for an Englishman, a true born Englishman, an Englishman in whose veins there is not a drop of un-English blood, to say and to do many things that are not in harmony with what is meant by "the English of it." He may be a sneak, he may be a coward, he may be a liar, he may be a hypocrite, he may be two-faced, he may say one thing and mean another; and it is all nonsense to say that such a character and such conduct are un-English, if Englishmen are no more free from these faults than other people. When we just think of the many swindles—great and small—that are perpetrated by Englishmen, one's faith in "the English of it," as expressive of truth and honesty and honour, is a good deal shaken. I

meet with some folk who, when such things are mentioned, exclaim sanctimoniously that such blots on our mercantile character are owing to our great intercourse with America ;—so these misdoings are not at all “the English of it,” but “the American of it.” Now I call that mean ; if it were true still it would be mean ; but where is the proof of its truthfulness ? I should think more rascals go from England to America than come from America to England. At all events there is so much genuinely native scoundrelism in our own country that the fewer stones we throw at other nations the better. The Americans have taught us the arts of deceit and knavery ! Suppose it were so ;—who taught these arts to them ?

But now, disclaiming all those Pharisaical and offensive assumptions of moral superiority which this expression suggests, let us take “the English of it,” not for what it really is worth, but for what we mean it and desire it to be worth. It conveys two principal ideas, viz.,—pluniness and truthfulness.

Without being at all untruthful, a man may express himself in such terms as need to be explained if all our people are to understand them, and the explanation is “the English of it.” Here is an example, familiar no doubt to many of you ;—in Johnson’s Dictionary I find a common, well known article described or defined thus—“a thing reticulated or decussated, with interstices between the intersections.” Surely the thing so described must be something very extraordinary. Pray what highly-favoured individual ever saw a thing “reticulated or decussated, with interstices between the intersections ?” Did you ever see a fisherman’s net ? Did you ever see a basket ? If you have seen either, you have seen that thing “reticulated, decussated,” &c. Possibly it was in fun that Dr. Johnson used such awful words to describe a piece of net-work ; possibly he meant to satirize the practice of using long and hard words

where short and easy ones would serve a great deal better. Anyhow, the thing "reticulated, decussated," &c., illustrates, by contrast, what my meaning is when I say that "the English of it" signifies, or should signify, great plainness of speech. Very properly, the Church of England, in her articles, protests against conducting any religious service "in a tongue not understood of the people." That protest was no doubt raised against the use of the Latin language in the Church of Rome; but it is a protest that may be carried much further than that, its original design. There is no need to take to Latin in order that a man may speak "in a tongue not understood of the people." Latin is sometimes unwisely resorted to in preaching. I once heard a minister addressing a number of Lancashire operatives, and he told them that "he anticipated no objection to his dispensing with preliminary observations, and therefore would, without further procrastination, cast himself *in medias res*." I thought to myself how true that old proverb is, "a man can't be a great fool unless he knows Latin." Why could not that worthy person have said—"I won't waste my time and yours in beating about the bush, but I will go right into my subject at once." Not long since I was one of a congregation who were informed that they were no better than they should be, that indeed they were very wicked; and this novel and striking piece of information was given in this "reticulated, decussated," &c., form; "there is, my friends, no small or insignificant measure of moral obliquity within the territories of your being." I have been told of an eloquent preacher who, wishing to impress upon his hearers the fact that they must die, wrapped it up in some such terms as these,—“the period would arrive when there would be a total and permanent cessation of all the vital functions—when the physical organisation should not only

cease to act, but should lose all susceptibility of renewed action.* It is said that another good man once endeavoured to awaken the fears of his congregation by addressing them thus,—“Remember, if you do not repent you will be annihilated—and if you are annihilated, what will you become? Why, you will become nonentities; and what will you think of yourselves then?” The English of this last specimen is that probably neither speaker nor hearer in the least understood what was said.

“We use great plainness of speech,” says the apostle Paul, and it would be well if every man who engages in the work of religious teaching were in this, as in other respects, to follow his excellent example. Of such plainness of speech we have a noble specimen in our English Bible, wherein there are but few words that a child cannot understand, although the subjects brought forward are, many of them, of the most profound character. I have sometimes imagined a proposal of this sort;—give to one of our theologians or preachers the sum and substance of what the bible contains, ask him to cast the bible into his own words, and what sort of a bible should we have? Since I find one author speaking of the first words of Christ’s Sermon on the Mount as “the fundamental formula of the Gospel,” and another describing our Saviour’s transfiguration as “either an objective fact or a subjective psychological phenomenon,” I fear such a bible as I am supposing would contain much of the “reticulated, decussated,” &c., English.

There may be English that is grammatically faultless and scientifically exact, and yet is not the English of the great bulk of the English people; there are circumstances in which words not commonly understood must be employed; there also are some phrases, both Latin and French, that have become so thoroughly naturalized that most people know their meaning;

still, "great plainness of speech" should be the aim and study of all who have important truths to tell the common people; and what the common people understand will not be to the uncommon people incomprehensible.

The use of pedantic, "inkhorn" words is, however, a very harmless departure from the principle of "the English of it" compared with the practice of using words which disguise our real meaning,—which glose over something that is bad,—which put good for evil and evil for good, sweet for bitter and bitter for sweet, light for darkness and darkness for light. As an old proverb says, "there is no pot so ugly as not to find a pot lid," so there are few bad things for which good, or at all events harmless, names have not been invented—which give us anything but "the English" of such things, if "the English" of them be the truth concerning them.

What, for instance, is "the English of it" when a man who has committed a crime, being brought up for trial, is advised to plead "Not Guilty," and acts upon such advice. It will be said, perhaps, that the plea "Not Guilty" means no more than "not proved guilty." Perhaps, then, it would be as well to put these words into the culprit's mouth; for "the English" of the plea "Not Guilty" is something that can hardly be distinguished from a lie. And when a witness is sworn to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, he may fulfil the first and last of these conditions, but he is often prohibited from fulfilling the second. "The English" of telling the whole truth is sometimes this,—telling as much of the truth as it is prudent to tell, or as much as you are allowed to tell. You call upon a person who is in his house, but for some reason or other does not wish to see you. Perhaps you have called for the settlement of that little account; perhaps you have called on some begging business;

perhaps you are an endless talker and a great bore; perhaps the gentleman you call upon is very much occupied with something important. Anyhow, if the answer you get to your inquiry is that Mr. So-and-so is not at home, what is "the English of it"? "The English of it," if by this we mean the truth of it, is that Mr. So-and-so is a liar, and that he is training his servant to be a liar too.

Many a letter begins with the very respectful word "Sir," which, were the writer to put into honest "English" what he means and feels, would begin with the word "Rascal"; and if some letters closed not with "I am yours sincerely," not with "I am your humble and obedient servant," not with "accept the assurances of my most distinguished consideration," but with "I am yours hypocritically," or "I don't care two pins about you," or, "accept the assurances of my most profound contempt," in such forms of correspondence you would have "the English of it." You say it would never do to write in this brutal style. I admit it would not; and I don't say that you are under any moral obligation to express all you think and feel, but you *are* under moral obligation not to express what you don't think or feel. So, if you find a difficulty, a struggle between conscience and courtesy, perhaps the best compromise is to subscribe thus—"I am, &c."; this commits you to nothing, and enables you to save your conscience without insulting your correspondent. And, by the way, speaking of expressions of a respect that is not always felt, I may remark that we have an article which we call mourning; there are deep mourning, slight mourning, and, I am informed, complimentary mourning. This article is not by any means a feeling of grief or regret. To give "the English of it," it is—raiment with more or less of blackness in it. But, once we admit the right of the stuff to be called mourning, I don't

know that we can find fault with "the English" of the expression "such persons are in mourning"; it may often save us from the mistake or the hypocrisy of saying that the mourning is in them.

We have many pretty words which are employed to hide the ugliness of very ugly things. Thus, when duelling was in fashion people called it "an affair of honour;" "the English of it" being just this, that it was an affair of murder attempted,—in many cases, of murder committed. Until recently the Americans had what some of them cleverly called "a domestic institution;" "the English of it" was slavery, and the buying and selling of men and women like cattle at a fair. And how many fine words have been employed, and still are employed, to put a good face upon the demon of war,—valour, heroism, fame, glory, brilliant victories, immortal memories; "the English" of such terms being, for the most part, pride and fury, battle and carnage, fire and famine, pestilence and death, and something like £800,000,000 of debt. We vote vast sums of money for the construction of defences; and before they are finished, but when it is too late to save the money, "the English of it" is blurted out in the House of Commons, to the effect that the said defences are utterly incapable of defending us from anything. I saw the other day, what may indeed be seen almost any day, an advertisement announcing that somebody had several valuable church livings or benefices to dispose of. Well, this might of course mean that the man intended, and with all his heart desired, in the interests of religion, to bestow the said benefices on the best clergymen he could find; but "the English of it" was that the word *dispose* looked rather more decent than the word *sell*; for his intention was to knock the benefices down to such men as, whatever their characters, should prove the highest bidders.

Dishonest things are often varnished over with words and phrases that cleverly hide their real character. I should like to know what "the English" of "value received" amounts to in some commercial bills. "Speculation" is a very innocent looking word. It may mean no more than the faculty of sight. "Thou hast no speculation in those eyes." It may mean some very harmless exercise of thought upon theology, philosophy, or politics. But in many a case, when the word is used in a mercantile sense, "the English of it" is swindling and robbery. When a man is said to be "in difficulties," "the English of it" often is that he has spent three-halfpence of his own money, and 19s. 10½d. of other people's. Even the word "embezzlement" puts a polish, though slight, I admit, upon fraud; and the word *defaulter* lets down a wrong doer rather more gently than the rough and ready word *thief*. Often, too, when a man has been unfortunate and comes, not begging, but "asking assistance," "the English of it" is that he has played the fool with himself, that he has been an idle, drunken, good for nothing fellow. I say often, not always; don't misunderstand me; but if I am to judge from the cases that I have met with, "the English" of "misfortune" is, in nine cases out of ten, "misconduct."

And so, for vice in its various forms we, blunt, honest, straightforward Englishmen, who are supposed to "call a spade a spade," we, I say, have for vice in its various forms words that don't tell the truth. I suppose we, or our forefathers rather, tried to paint the bloated face of the profligate by calling him a libertine, thus cunningly conveying the idea that he was a person who considered himself free, or a person of liberal ideas; but the paint would not wash, or, rather, it was soon washed off; the beastly features of the animal showed through it, and now the name exposes rather than conceals

him; and, so far as the word implies freedom, all know that "the English of it" is freedom from all virtue and from all decency. Instead of calling him a libertine, we now commonly call him a gay man, a man who lives a very gay life; and this word gay is good and pleasant, as we think of it in connection with the mirthfulness and lightheartedness of children, or with the bright plumage and the merry songs of birds; but, as applied to a mode of life, "the English of it" is a thoughtless life, a licentious life, a life spent in the ruin of both body and soul, a life in which whatever gaiety there is, is heavily discounted by misery and shame. This word, this great word "life," is itself subjected to the same perversion. To *see life* is to see folly and wickedness and dirt; for, according to some people, to *see life* you must see all the slums and stews of the town. Life in fact is a word that often stands for death in its very worst and most horrible form, for the worst and most horrible form of death is a soul dead to wisdom, to truth, to purity, and to God. A career of folly and dissipation is glozed over by the phrase "sowing his wild oats." Many are the attempts to shirk the plain "English" of the words "he is drunk;" no one likes to have this said of him,—no one is willing to confess it. And so a man in this condition is excited, or he is not quite himself, or he is disguised, or he is in a state of slight inebriety, or he is mellow, or he has been dining out; and if even a statesman make a fool of himself in an after-dinner speech the apology is that it is an after-dinner speech; and we have got a fine new name for orations of this sort—we call them post-prandial speeches, "the English" of which is "wine-in and wit-out speeches." But to descend from such refined ways of putting it, you may say that your friend has had a drop too much, or he is fresh, or he is tight, or he is screwed; or, strangest of all, he is glorious. It de-

pende a good deal upon who or what he is ; if he be a gentleman, he is a little elevated ; if he be a working man, he is fuddled ; “the English of it” is, in every case, that the fellow is drunk.

I should suppose that one of the most modern of these terms, used for the purpose of putting a fair face upon a foul thing, is a word intended to hide “the English” of cursing and swearing. The genteel name for all manner of oaths and bad language is “expletives.” Now, an expletive is properly a word put into a sentence to fill up a vacancy, or to serve as an ornament of speech. These expletives certainly do fill up vacancies which, however, had better remain vacant if you have nothing better to fill them up with ; but as to ornament ! Tell me next that a squint is an ornament, that a nose like a live coal is an ornament, that lameness or any other infirmity or deformity is an ornament. Expletives !—Under this very innocent word you try to conceal the taking of God’s name in vain, the consigning of your neighbour to perdition, the utterance of all manner of senseless and filthy words wherewith you garnish your speech. No ! “the English” of your expletives is—cursing and swearing, and coarseness and beastliness.

It is curious to observe how an inquiry into “the English of it” discovers in some words, intended to be abusive or contemptuous, that which is in reality praiseworthy and complimentary. Of such words I might instance innocent, and simple, and unsophisticated, when used in derision ; and even “an honest man,” as the proverb says, “is, nowadays, only a civil name for a fool.” Of such words Methodist and Puritan are well-known examples ; words coined by enemies in disdain of the regularity, strictness, and purity of life professed and practised by those on whom the names were bestowed. Similarly “the English” of the word Saint turns the sneer into an admission

of moral superiority. There is, indeed, very great reason for supposing that the name Christian was at first a nickname. If this were so, and the disciples of Jesus were first called Christians in derision and contempt, I will only say may "the English of it," which is "followers of Christ,—imitators of Christ, or Christ-like people," ever be a true and faithful description of all who are known by this name. Yes, my friends, "the English of it" is a principle or an idea which, faithfully applied to the word Christian, will teach us many a useful lesson, and make in our characters many a discovery that must be humiliating and painful, yet will withal point out that which is lacking, but which, God helping us, may be supplied in order that we may be all that "the English" of this word Christian means.

ERRATUM IN FIRST LECTURE—"I CAN'T AFFORD IT."

Page 10, line 18, *for* "are just uttering," *read* "can find nothing."

“THE UPPER AND THE LOWER CLASSES.”

I confess that I do not greatly like these words, and I will tell you why. The very sound of them has something in it that strikes me as unkind, un-neighbourly, unbrotherly, un-Christian. They seem to separate man from his fellow-man, or, at least, if not to sever, to loosen those bonds of fellowship that should closely unite us all as being all “the offspring of God,” and the objects of his care and love. Such terms also have the tendency to create and to keep alive bad feelings, to foster contempt on the one hand and hatred on the other. And therefore I very seldom speak of my fellow-men as consisting of or comprising “the upper and lower classes.” I avoid these expressions as much as I can ; though, of course, it is almost impossible altogether to escape falling into the use of terms which are so very generally current amongst us.

And yet, undoubtedly, there are facts which not only explain but also go a long way towards justifying the use of these expressions. For there is a class that is rich and there is a class that is poor,—there is a class that is comparatively independent and there is a class that is very dependent,—there is a class that rides on horseback or in carriages and there is a class that has to tramp along on foot,—there is a class that enjoys many luxuries and there is a class that can barely obtain the necessaries of life,—there is a class that is well informed and

there is a class that is steeped in ignorance,—there is a class that is highly refined and there is a class that is very rude ; indeed, I do not go too far when I say that amongst us, as a people, we have not only a class that is civilised, but also a class, and a large class, that is almost in a state of savagery. These differences are so great, and indicate on the one hand such superiority, and on the other such inferiority of condition, that it is not to be wondered at that the terms “upper and lower classes” should have been invented, and should have come into general use.

Why then, it may be asked, should I or anybody else hesitate to use words which just honestly express facts ? My hesitation in this matter arises from the fear lest the spirit in which I might use such words should be misunderstood ; lest I should be thought, in speaking of the “lower classes,” without avowing myself to be one of them, to regard with contempt a large proportion of my fellow-men, amongst whom, though they be in what is called “the lower classes,” are thousands and tens of thousands of the best men in the world ; and I think it would be well, that it would be to the interest of good feeling and good fellowship, if we could banish these terms altogether, or at least give them some clearer and truer meaning than that which they commonly bear. Because, as I shall endeavour presently to show, the distinctions which are generally understood by these terms are not exactly those which make one man or one class superior or inferior to another. I do not hesitate to say that the distinctions which are generally understood by these terms would place Herod and Pontius Pilate amongst the “upper classes,” and Jesus Christ and his apostles a good long way down in “the lower.” Now that is an arrangement of “upper and lower classes” to which I, for one, certainly cannot agree. Make character the standard,—make

It, at all events, the principal element in the estimate of men and of classes of men. If you will, let wealth stand for something, let knowledge stand for something, let refinement of manners stand for something, but let character stand for a thousand times as much as all those other things put together; and if you will on this principle construct your "upper and lower classes," then be it so by all means, and the terms so employed and so understood would be unobjectionable. But more of this just now.

Returning to the common use of these expressions, it is obvious to remark that between "the upper and the lower classes" there has been, and some think there still is, a good deal of bad blood. The aristocracy and the democracy, the employer and employed, have had hard thoughts of one another, and used hard words towards one another; each too often considering the other his natural and irreconcilable enemy; each believing that the other desired above all things to crush and to destroy him. And so class has fought against class, and the fight still goes on, in political, mercantile, and social life. From the one side there have come such offensive and scornful expressions as,—*"the senseless rabble," "the swinish multitude," "the great unwashed;"* from the other, in return for such compliments, there have come such equally offensive and scornful expressions as,—*"the bloated aristocracy,"* and *"the snobbish millocracy."* And very often when the man who, as a member of the so-called "lower class," was most fierce and furious in his hatred and denunciation of the so-called "upper class," contrives to get out of the former into the latter, none is so contemptuous towards the "lower," none so bitter in his scorn or so relentless in his oppression. "Set a beggar on horseback,"—you know the rest of the proverb; make a raging democrat an aristocrat, and, as a rule, he is the very man to be foremost

in riding rough-shod over the class from which he sprang. No man is so likely to prove a tyrant as he who was once a slave. Says one of the ancients—"For three things the earth is disquieted, and for four which it cannot bear;" and then he mentions first—"for a servant when he reigneth."

Certainly there have been times in the history of our country when the bad and bitter feelings between "upper and lower classes" admitted of some justification, especially on the part of the latter. For all legislative power was substantially in the hands of the former. The great bulk of the so-called "lower class" or "classes" had no voice in the enactment of the laws; and the "upper classes" did precisely what, with the same chance, the "lower classes" would have done and would do now; they made the laws, as far as they decently could, and perhaps a little farther than that, in their own special favour; and the people were heavily taxed and grievously oppressed that the aristocracy might live in splendour and in power. The burdens of the state did not fall equally upon the shoulders of the people, but fell principally upon those who were least able to bear them. One government chastised "the lower classes" with whips, to be succeeded by another that chastised them with scorpions. "The lower classes," because of their poverty and their ignorance, are most exposed to the temptation to commit some kinds of crime, and the penal code was made most barbarously severe. A poor wretch who, goaded by hunger, stole 5s. from a shop, was liable to be hanged for it. It was not quite true that "one man might steal a horse while another durst not look over the hedge," but certainly the punishments inflicted for offences which poor and miserable people were terribly tempted to commit were excessively and barbarously severe, and there was too much colour for the common saying that there was "one law for the rich and

another for the poor," and that "laws catch flies but let hornets go free." Even in regard to religion "the upper classes" often oppressed "the lower." I am not in the least ashamed, as a dissenter, to confess that the dissenters in this country have always consisted largely of persons belonging to what are commonly called "the lower classes;" and the non-conforming Ministry has always had this mark of apostolical succession, that, as a rule, it has been composed of men as poor as Peter and Paul. In hundreds of cases "the lower classes" have, in their religious movements, been opposed, oppressed, and thwarted by "the upper." There have been great landlords who would not on any account allow a dissenting chapel to be built upon their estates, and would not sell land for such a purpose at any price. A friend of mine tells me of a case he once met with in which a man, whose only offence was that he was a Primitive Methodist, and held a prayer meeting in his little cottage, was driven out and had to break up his humble home and leave the neighbourhood, because, as the landlord's agent informed him, there was danger of the walls of the cottage coming down in consequence of the people's singing so loud. How true it is that "if you wish for a pretence to beat a dog, it is enough to say that he ate up the frying-pan." But all over the country, in England, in Scotland, in Ireland, these oppressions of "the lower classes," touching upon and treading upon their religious life, have been not rare but very common. Then, in old times, there were the combination laws, which sent workmen to prison not merely for intimidating other workmen, but also for agreeing amongst themselves to work only for such or such wages; but the law did not prevent masters from combining to make their profits, which were their wages, as high as they pleased, or as high as they could. And so there used to be some ground for the hostile feelings with which many of "the

lower classes" regarded "the upper." Perhaps too, when, on the outbreak of the great French revolution, democracy so fearfully avenged itself for all that it had suffered under aristocratic insolence and tyranny, and since that time, when unwise and perhaps unscrupulous and self-interested agitators have tried to influence the passions of the people, some ground has been afforded for the hostility of "the upper classes" to "the lower," and for the fears and the jealousies with which any relaxation of the old rigour in regard to them has been viewed. In so far as socialism or communism made way amongst "the lower classes," striking at the rights of property, it is not to be wondered at that those who had property looked with a suspicious eye upon those who had none.

Thank God, however, most of those unhappy grounds of difference no longer exist, and none of them exist to the extent to which they were found amongst us in what some stupid people call "the good old times." "The lower classes" have at last obtained their fair share of political power; and it is satisfactory to know that this change has been brought about by the joint action of both the great political parties in the state. Now, I think, we may say that every man whose voice is worth hearing has a voice in the enactment of the laws by which he is to be governed; and as the constitution now stands, we are not, it is true, all one class, but we are much nearer that than we were; and the terms "upper and lower classes" have not very much political meaning or value, since Jack is as good a man as his master at the polling booth. A few more advances in the same direction, and, so far as this department of things is concerned, there will be neither "upper" nor "lower class," and so "Ephraim shall no longer envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim." That is what it is coming to—perfect equality in political rights and powers, and an end of all class legislation.

And, long since, the penal code has been so reformed that there is something like a fair proportion between crime and its punishment, and a poor fellow can't be hung for stealing five shillings. Workmen may combine to their heart's content for a rise of wages, so long as they don't interfere with another workman's freedom of individual action. And even in regard to religion, "the lower classes" meet with rather more tolerance and charity from "the upper," when they don't belong to their church, than was commonly the case until recently. I know something of "the lower classes," and on that knowledge found the belief that on their part there is not much bad feeling towards those who have been more favoured by fortune. They have sent scarcely a member of their own class to Parliament; they have in but few instances attempted to do so, but have enthusiastically gone and voted for noblemen and millionaires. Indeed I think that "the lower classes" love a Lord a great deal more than they hate him, and let a man have a pretty big handle to his name, and though he be the veriest ass in England, he will be all but worshipped by multitudes of "the lower class." A member of the royal family has only to appear in any part of Her Majesty's dominions and the poorest and humblest of the people throng to do him honour. The unkind things that have of late been said about the Queen, the dissatisfaction that has been expressed because of her being so overwhelmed with her great sorrow, and because of her leading so private a life, have not proceeded from "the lower classes," but either from the people who delight in the gaieties of a Royal court, or the shopkeepers who supply them with their finery. Of "the upper classes" I know very little; but the little that I have been permitted to know of them leads me to say, and to say in all sincerity, that I believe that the feelings of "the upper classes" toward the lower are

not contemptuous, but respectful. Than "the upper classes" no people in this world were ever kinder to the poor and the distressed. There are merchants and bankers (need I name Peabody ?),—there are noble lords (who has not heard of Shaftesbury ?),—there are illustrious ladies (for example, Miss Burdett Coutts),—whose valuable time, whose great talents, whose enormous wealth, and, most precious of all, whose large hearted sympathies are consecrated to the service of the poorest and humblest in the land; and we in this town can never forget the donor of our public library, or the name of William Rathbone. Such members of various degrees of "the upper classes," of the moneyocracy, and of the aristocracy, give the best proof that the "upper classes" are not all hostile, or hard, or indifferent to "the lower" and to "the lowest." And if amongst these so-called there yet remains any feeling of distrust or dislike towards those, I think it is time such feeling should cease, and should give place to one more amiable and more just, a feeling of respect and of gratitude. And if "the upper classes," in greater numbers, go on to act as happily not a few of them have done and are doing,—if, solemnly regarding their wealth, their influence, their position, as a trust committed to them in the providence of God for the welfare of the world,—if, I say, in this spirit they live and labour, not for themselves alone, but for their humble neighbours, according to every man the respect that is due to him as a man,—putting on no haughty or scornful airs,—taking the lead in every movement, whether political, social, or religious, calculated to make the people happier, wiser, and better,—then the trade of the agitating demagogue, who would array class against class and set society by the ears, and "fish in troubled waters," is for ever at an end.

It is to be observed, too, that it is quite possible for a man to climb from the "lower classes" into "the upper." It is

common enough to hear people say that there is as much caste in England as in India, but that is nonsense. Do people who speak so know what caste in India means? Are they aware that there "each caste has its own peculiar privileges, duties, laws, which are incommunicable and inalienable;" that "every individual remains invariably in the caste in which he was born, and is precluded from ever aspiring to a higher, whatever may be his genius, his virtue, his patriotism, or his courage?" Do those who say that there is as much caste in England as in India know such facts as those on the Indian side of the question, and did they ever hear of such facts as these on the English side of it, viz.:—that Lord Tenterden was the son of a poor barber; that one British peerage was founded by a ship-wright, another by a cloth-worker, another by a nail-maker, another by a stocking-weaver? Do they know that on the benches of the House of Commons there sit, and have sat, some men who began life in very humble ways, and many whose fathers and grandfathers were labourers or mechanics? Do they know that if a man distinguish himself by any great achievement in art, in science, in literature, though he were born in a gutter, there is no class so high as to look down upon such a man; nay, the very highest is that which most willingly welcomes him to its circles. If our great African traveller, Livingstone, should return, as now, thank God, we have some reason to hope he will, there's hardly a noble house in Great Britain, or in Europe, that would not deem it an honour to have him as its guest; and it will by no means tell against him that, as he says in his book of Travels, at the age of ten he was put into the factory, as a piecer, to aid by his earnings in lessening his mother's anxieties as she strove to make both ends meet. When Joseph Brotherton, as member for Salford, speaking on the Ten Hours' Bill, related his own experience of hardships

endured in a cotton mill, and when Sir James Graham rose and expressed himself prouder than ever of the House of Commons, as he saw that a man could rise from so lowly a position to sit amongst the legislators of his country, there came from both sides of the House a loud and long-continued burst of cheering. And yet, because some man finds that his richer neighbour gives him the cold shoulder and never asks him to dinner, there is, forsooth, as much caste in England as in India! Again I say it is nonsense to talk in such a way as that. In this country "the upper classes," understanding by the term the wealthier classes and the titled classes, consist very largely of persons who, either their own selves or with the intervention of one generation, have sprung from "the lower" and "the lowest." My object now is not to encourage an ambitious desire to rise in society, but just to show that, since there is no inseparable barrier between "the upper and the lower classes,"—since intellect and energy are capable of elevating a man from the one to the other,—there ought, on this account, to be all the less of jealous and envious feeling between our various classes.

On this subject of classes and distinction of classes amongst men we find, as we might expect, that the Bible holds a very even balance; or, if there be a turn at all, it is in favour of what are called "the lower classes." Perhaps the best evidence of its fairness is, that extreme people on either side have claimed it as the supporter of their demands. The Bible requires "every soul" to be "subject to the higher powers." It enjoins upon all Christians the duty of praying "for kings and for all that are in authority." The apostle Paul, having on one occasion been grossly insulted by a Jewish ruler, and not knowing the man's position, addressed him in very severe terms; but on being informed of what he had done, he instantly apologised, quoting the commandment "thou shalt not speak evil of the

“ruler of thy people.” Even in speaking to masters and slaves, the same apostle neither commands the former to grant emancipation nor encourages the latter to rebel, but advises kindness on the one side and fidelity on the other. Certainly “the upper classes” have no reason to fear that they will suffer through anything that the Bible says or implies with regard to these class distinctions. And then, as to “the lower class” or classes, if by them we are to understand the poor, the hard-working people, the Bible is their kindest friend, and their warmest and most powerful advocate. There is, perhaps, no evil which it denounces more frequently or more strongly than oppression. It spares no tyrant, great or small, whether he be a sovereign seated on his throne or a farmer superintending his servants working in his fields. The law of Moses enabled every labouring man to demand his day’s wages at the end of the day’s work ; and, if a poor fellow pledged his garment, the man who took it in pledge was compelled to let him have it, evening by evening, before the sun went down, whether it was redeemed or not. No man was allowed to clear all the corn off his field, all the fruit off his olive trees or his vines ; there was to be a liberal gleaning left for “the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.” If a man became unfortunate and was obliged to part with his estate, it came back to him or to his heir at the year of Jubilee. God, in the Bible, hath showed us “that we should not call any man common or unclean ;” and “the rich and the poor meet together—the Lord is the maker of them all.” The kingdom of Christ is thus prophetically described :—“He shall judge the poor of the people ; he shall save the children of the needy and shall break in pieces the oppressor. He shall deliver the needy when he crieth ; the poor also and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem

their soul from deceit and violence, and precious shall their blood be in his sight." Of sympathy with "the lower classes," what better testimony can we have than the fact that our Saviour, with all ranks to choose from, chose to belong to what is understood when we speak of "the lower class,"—"Is not this the carpenter?" "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the son of man hath not where to lay his head." No doubt the poor widow who cast her two mites into the treasury belonged to what we call "the lower classes," and he bestowed upon her such praise as he ever gave to the rich who cast in much. Need I say how he raised the lower classes when he addressed them, in common with others, as the children of "our Father who is in heaven." You find, on the part of Jesus Christ, not the slightest respect of persons founded upon worldly rank or worldly wealth. Perhaps the severest thing ever said about rich men was said by him when he declared that it was "easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." The example of Christ faithfully followed, the precepts given by Christ faithfully acted upon, would lead to this result,—that all people would respect and love each other, and all class feelings, if not indeed all class distinctions, would come to an end. And when I think of what "the lower classes" once were, of their universal enslavement, of the utter contempt and the abominable injustice and the heartless cruelty with which their superiors treated them, and contemplate the different state of things that now exists, and try to understand how this different state of things has been brought to pass, I feel very firmly convinced of this, that the principal cause of so great and beneficent a change has been the humanizing influence of the example, the teaching, and the spirit of Jesus Christ.

And now, in conclusion, I would say if we are to have

“upper and lower classes,” let us have them based upon some better foundation than that on which they most generally stand. Let them, as I said just now, be based upon character, and chiefly upon moral character. As the terms are now employed and understood, it is enough for a man to have money, and though he be a fool, or though he be a profligate, or though he be a knave, he is considered one of “the upper classes;” and if a man be poor, however intelligent, however honest, however virtuous in all respects, his poverty is sufficient to consign him to “the lower classes.” Surely the Searcher of all hearts and weigher of all actions classifies men in a very different manner! To Him who estimates men according to their conformity with his will, in loving Him and loving their neighbours, the members of our “upper and lower classes” must, in many instances, appear in an inverted order; some of the highest being lowest, and some of the lowest highest. This standard of moral worth, the only standard we should admit, soon turns our class distinctions upside down, raising the beggar from the dunghill, and placing some mighty potentate there in his stead. The “lower classes!”—who are they in the sight of God? The untruthful and dishonest, the intemperate and impure, the hard-hearted and the selfish, the violent and brutish, the godless and the profane. And the “upper classes!”—who in God’s sight are they? Surely the men and the women who manifest the virtues that are opposed to such vices. And you are one of the real “upper classes” in so far as your character and your conduct are right, one of the real “lower classes” in so far as your character and conduct are wrong. The man who was “clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day,” was in God’s sight one of the “lowest class;” and Lazurus, who lay at the rich man’s gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fell from his

table, was one of the "highest." There are some here who belong to this true "upper class;" but not because they have more money than their neighbours, though this may be; and not because they are better informed than their neighbours, though this too may be; and not because they follow a calling in life less lowly than that followed by their neighbours, though this also may be the case;—but because, whatever be their condition in those respects, they are honest, truthful, pure-minded, sober, large-hearted, God-fearing, and neighbour-loving men; this makes them members of a "class" that has a right to be called "the upper." And possibly there are some here who pertain to the truly "lower and lowest classes;" yet not because they are poor,—not because they are ignorant,—not because their manners are destitute of refinement, though such may be the fact,—but because, whether rich or poor, well informed or ignorant, polite or rude, they are low in moral character and moral worth.

Taking this as our standard in regard to "classes, upper and lower," the titled aristocrat may be at the bottom of the latter, and the humblest peasant at the head of the former. And, taking this standard, it is plain that there need be no "lower class" at all amongst us, unless it is of necessity that men are dishonest and licentious and profane. Understanding the terms thus, "the lower class" may rise to "the upper," every one of them. There is nothing but their own depraved will and their own evil passions to keep them down, and these, by God's help, they may so far overcome as to rise in moral excellence into God's own "upper class." Much is said now-a-days about an "aristocracy of intellect;" but it is, I think, fairly open to doubt whether an "aristocracy of intellect" would be much better for mankind than an aristocracy of blood or an aristocracy of money. The truest and the best of all aristocracies is that which is founded on moral character, and whose title to respect arises from virtue and Godliness.

“THERE IS A LION IN THE WAY.”

Who says so? Well, Solomon says so, or rather Solomon represents a lazy man as saying so by way of excusing his laziness. “The slothful man saith there is a Lion in the way ; a Lion is in the streets.” And again,—“There is a Lion without ; I shall be slain in the streets.” The lazy fellow was an object of Solomon’s great dislike and contempt, and, in the Book of Proverbs, he often gives him a dig. “I went by the field of the slothful and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding, and lo it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw and considered it well ; I looked upon it and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep : so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.” “The sluggard will not plough by reason of the cold, therefore shall he beg in harvest and have nothing.” “Go to the ant thou sluggard ; consider her ways and be wise.” “A slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom, and will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.” In this sentence Solomon’s idea of a lazy man comes near to that given in the proverb—“As lazy as Ludlam’s dog, that leant his head against a wall to bark.”

But, to return to our subject, “There is a Lion in the way ; a Lion is in the streets.” Not a likely thing, but a thing extremely unlikely, in Jerusalem and in every other Jewish town, although Lions might be found in wild parts of the country not very far off.

Samson had met with one, David with another ; but as to a Lion in the streets, that was all humbug, and the fellow who talked about such a thing knew it. And this is the pith of what Solomon puts into the mouth of the lazy man,—that he is ready to excuse his laziness under any pretence, however untrue and however ridiculous ; and I dare say we have heard idle fellows try to justify their idleness by excuses as false and as foolish as this of Solomon's sluggard.

What Solomon's sluggard says suggests for our consideration the excuses which men often make for neglecting their duty. There are three kinds of men who are much given to this practice, three kinds of men who often say and sometimes think that "there is a Lion in the way." Such is, in effect, the excuse put forward by the indolent man, by the changeable man, and by the timid man. The first says "there is a Lion in the way" because he dislikes hard work ; the second because he has not perseverance enough to contend with difficulties ; the third because he shrinks from everything that has the smallest appearance of danger.

The indolent man says "there is a Lion in the way." If you were to go to an idle fellow who kept in his own house or sat in the public-house, if you were to remonstrate with him on his mis-spending of his time, and to urge him to turn to and work, and he were to excuse himself by saying "there is a Lion in the way," you would laugh in his face and reply—"nonsense man, you must be either a liar or an idiot ; there are horses in the street, and dogs in the street, and asses, plenty of them, some with four legs and ten times as many with only two, but there are no 'Lions' there." Of course no idle fellow, however unwilling to work, would say in so many words "there is a Lion in the way ;" but the idler would, probably enough, when remonstrated with, make an excuse not much

nearer than that to wisdom and to truth. The excuses put forward by some people who come begging to my door are not much better than that made by Solomon's sluggard—"there is a Lion in the way," or "there was a Lion in the way," or "there might have been a Lion in the way," or "somebody said that there was a Lion in the way." I ask a man how is it that you are out of work?—and he tells me that the last place he was in the work was too hard for him, and that he is fit only for some "light occupation," his constitution won't stand long hours and great exertion; or the employer or the foreman took some dislike to him, for no cause in the world, and discharged him. I ask him how he comes to be so very poor, and he pleads a large family, or sickness, or slackness of trade. Of course these excuses are often, too often, true enough; especially this last of dull trade and bad times; but often, too, when we come to inquire into them, we find that they are more or less unsound, that though there is truth, there is not the whole truth and nothing but the truth in them; there was some reason for the employer's or the foreman's dislike and dissatisfaction; and some reason, and not at all a creditable reason, for the ill-health and the shattered constitution that can stand only some "light employment." The true answer to my question would often be "I am out of work; I am penniless; I have hardly a shirt to my back, or a shoe to my foot; my family is starving;—because I have played the fool exceedingly, and thrown away my chances of success." I say to such a one,—There's many a man whose chances of doing well for himself were no better than yours, nor half so good, and yet he has done well for himself. Your excuses "won't wash"; they are all a pretence; they are little if any better than that of Solomon's lazy lubber. If in a man's way there be such a Lion as the sheer impossibility of

getting work to do, the poor fellow is to be pitied and helped; but what Lion is there in the way when, although there is work to be had, a man won't go to it on the Monday! Is that the day on which especially the Lions prowl about the streets, driving tailors and shoemakers, smiths and bricklayers, carpenters and masons, into the public-houses for refuge? I think that it is there you will meet the Lions; the beer, the gin, the whisky, and the rum that you devour there are the Lions that, if you don't look out, will devour you. If there really be "a Lion in the way," a downright, honest, valid excuse for being out of work, out of pocket, and out of bread, you deserve the deepest commiseration; but don't dress up an Ass in a Lion's skin and tell us that *that* is a Lion; be sure his long ears will pop out of the covering, or he will begin to bray, and you and your sham Lion will be dismissed, as you ought to be, with more kicks than halfpence. No! I will tell you, my friend, what is in your way. Your own indolence, your horror of hard work, your dislike of being put into a perspiration, your desire to lead a very easy life, your partiality for pleasure, so called, leading you into extravagance. These things are in the way of your doing well in the world. I have often been reminded of the contemptuous manner in which the Germans answer the cry of Solomon's sluggard—"There is a Lion in the way," when they say "There's a goose at the gate"; and, of course, if it be "a goose" that is "at the gate," something much less terrible than "a Lion" will effectually prevent his venturing into "the way." And so, in regard to these excuses for idleness and laziness, two questions present themselves; not only what is it that stands "in the way"? but also, what sort of a creature is it that stands at "the gate," afraid to sally forth into "the way?"

But the lazy man is not the only person who says "there is

a Lion in the way." *He* says so without in the least believing it, and merely as an excuse for his indolence, and a lame excuse it is ; there are others, however, who in effect say this with more or less belief that it is as they say ; not, of course, that they believe that there literally is "a Lion" in their way, but they believe that there is before them something so extremely difficult to deal with that it will prove too much for them. I now refer more especially to men who are of an unstable character, and who set out upon some course with great spirit and apparent determination, but are soon discouraged, and after spending time, money, and labour upon the object of their pursuit, abandon it in despair.

There are some people who either can't or won't foresee a difficulty. If any one points out such a thing to them they pooh-pooh him and won't believe him ; or, if they cannot but believe him because the thing is so plain and certain, still they are very sanguine, full of hope, and confident that, be the difficulty what it may, they will be more than a match for it. While it is at a distance the difficulty looks small, appears to present no great obstacle ; like a mountain several thousand feet high, which, seen from afar, seems easy enough to climb, so that even the most portly man believes that he can go up it like a stag, until he really has to tackle it. For there is such a thing as "making a mole-hill of a mountain," as well as "making a mountain of a mole-hill ;" such a thing as under-rating as well as overrating a difficulty ; and he who does the former when the difficulty is far off is the very man to do the latter when it is close at hand, and when he gets into it. So when the over prudent and cautious man says to his sanguine friend "there is a Lion in the way," his sanguine friend replies "nonsense ! it is only a cat ;" but often, when he comes up to it, though it be nothing more than a cat, it assumes in his eyes the

dimensions, the strength, and the fierceness of "a Lion." The man has got tired of the object of his pursuit. He is not quite sincere in saying "there is a Lion in the way," but he wants some sort of an excuse to make to himself and to his friends for giving up what he had set about with such a fuss, and such a strong expectation of success. Now I dare say there are some men here, some young men, to whom these remarks apply. This, for example, is a very common case : a young man hears a lecture upon progress, upon mental culture, upon the advantages of knowledge ; or he reads some book like Dr. Smiles' admirable little work called "Self Help," which tells him of poor lads who, through their abilities and their perseverance, (itself, perhaps, the greatest of their abilities,) have risen to opulence or to fame. Such biographies are very stimulating, and stir up in the young reader's mind a strong and honourable ambition to excel ; he can hardly read of so many who have risen from his ranks without wishing himself to rise, and he rather hastily says to himself—If these men did such grand things, why should not I, who possess advantages far greater than those with which they at first were favoured ? Or it may be that our young friend knows some one whom he has actually seen advancing to eminence, and getting on splendidly in this line of work or in that. And so his heart is stirred within him. He has no lack of self-esteem, for it is not very often that you find a man, especially a young man, afflicted with a humble opinion of his abilities. Accordingly, full of hope, and more than hope, full of a very positive assurance, he sets to work, and sets to work in a great hurry. He avails himself of his advantages, and is very busy and industrious for a while. He sees no "Lion in the way"; the path is strewn with flowers. He has been told that it will be up-hill work ; he finds the road as level as a bowling-green. His eye is fixed upon the

prize that glitters from afar, and the splendour of which is too dazzling to allow of his seeing what lies between him and it. But the up-hill work soon comes, and the collar begins to tighten on his shoulder, and his breath grows shorter, and he begins to sweat uncomfortably, and the hill he has to climb hides the object of his ambition, and he sees other fellows sporting or lying asleep on the level land below him; and he begins to say to himself—"Well, after all, is the thing worth all this bother and self-denial, and am I at all likely to reach that goal?" Our young friend casts a wistful eye at the fellows who are taking things so pleasantly; he now finds that he had begun to build his tower without first sitting down to count the cost, and now he sees no end of "Lions in the way;" things which, at all events, look very like "Lions;" things which he is glad to believe are "Lions," that so he may have a decent excuse for turning back. He does not venture near enough to hear one of the "Lions" roar, or to see whether he is chained or not, or to learn whether he is a living "Lion" or a dead one, or one made of wood, or bronze, or stone, or the skin of one stuffed with straw. He would rather believe that what he sees are "Lions" than be convinced of the contrary. Now, where he saw no difficulties, he sees nothing but difficulties; and so he gives up his project, perhaps to repeat the same fruitless effort with regard to something else.

I believe that some of you have acted in this way; at all events I know that I have done so myself. I have in my study many a piece of unfinished manuscript which reminds me of things, and I hope not altogether foolish things, attempted but not done,—prosecuted for a time with ardour, but given up because I got tired of them. I am sure the world, or that very little atom of the world that may happen to know anything about me, is none the worse in consequence; my "entec-

prises" which have "turned awry" and "lost the name of action" have not been "enterprises of great pith or moment;" but I do not like to think of them, because they reproach me with a want of perseverance, and tell me that I am so uncertain a being that I cannot at all depend upon myself. And I think you will excuse this reference to my own tendency to say "there is a Lion in the way;" I speak of it in order that it may not be supposed that I speak to others of their failings with an assumption of superiority to such failings on my own part. In schools, evening schools, intended to help young men whose education has been much neglected, I have often to my great regret observed that, though many begin well, they do not continue long; they get discouraged, or they are "drawn away and enticed" by foolish, perhaps worse than foolish, pleasures. So it is with many others who are above the class that go to these evening schools. They have their moments of reflection, in which, ashamed of their deficiencies, or stimulated by the desire to make progress, they mean to learn this, they are determined to learn that. They proceed to carry out their purposes with an energy that at the first seems and before long proves too violent to last. Like fair-weather sailors, they get sick, and long to be ashore when the first gale of wind begins to blow. Like unwise builders, they have abandoned their unfinished towers, and in their minds there are the confused rudiments perhaps of several languages, and bits and fragments of various kinds of knowledge which were to have been built up into a stately structure of wisdom.

Now I will not assert that there are no "Lions in the way" of the man who desires and intends to make progress in wisdom and knowledge, and to rise above the level on which he stands with the inglorious throng composed of the ignorant and the stupid. If by "Lions" I am to understand difficulties, then, of

course, I must admit that there are many "Lions in the way." But it is to very little purpose that we have read or observed the lives of men who have achieved success, whether in business, in science, in literature, or anything else worth succeeding in, if we have not read or observed their conflicts with difficulty,—if we have not watched them as, Samson-like and David-like, they fought with and killed the "Lions" that met them and roared against them and sprang at them on their "way." If you think of Arkwright, founding the cotton manufacture and becoming the owner of a princely fortune,—think also of all that he had to contend with in rising to that position from his barber's shop in a cellar at Bolton, where he gave "a clean shave for a halfpenny." He met with "Lions" enough :—one was the rampant and roaring "Lion" of extreme poverty ; another, more strictly a "Lioness," was an impatient and ill-tempered wife, who, thinking that he was wasting time and money in his experiments, smashed his models to pieces ; then a whole pack of "Lions" came against him in the shape of a mob of Lancashire workmen, who destroyed his mill ; and then other "Lions," in the form of competing manufacturers, pounced upon his patent rights and tore them away from him. The principal use of the lives of successful men is this—that, if rightly written, they show us the difficulties with which such men met, and how they overcame them. Difficulties !—of course difficulties will be in your way, perhaps even to the very end of it ; but don't turn back at the first appearance of difficulty. The "Lion" is seldom so fierce as imagination paints him. Perhaps, like the "Lions" in the Pilgrim's Progress, he is chained, and his roar is worse than his bite. At all events, meet the difficulty and have a tussle with it. If you manage to kill one "Lion," you will be wonderfully prepared to meet and vanquish the next.

The timid man is another who is apt to think that "there is a Lion in the way," and to believe every fool who tells him so. Unlike the changeable man, he seldom so much as attempts anything that involves or is likely to involve difficulty. He does sit down and count the cost, but has a habit of over-estimating it; it may be, too, that he under-estimates his own powers. For this kind of mind, though rare, is sometimes met with; and, out of a genuine humility, a man looking at something which it is desirable he should do, and which others urge him to do, says, "I really cannot, I am sure I cannot." It is in vain to tell him that others have done the like,—that he does not dispute; but others had abilities to which he makes no pretence, or were in circumstances much more favourable than his. And the man is perfectly right, if people talk such nonsense to him as to tell him that any man may do anything provided he only has industry and perseverance; thus counting for nothing other powers of mind, or altogether denying their existence; as I once heard a lecturer tell an audience of very stupid people, myself included, that every one of us might become a Shakespeare or a Milton if we would.

Now I am sure that I do not wish to encourage self-conceit; there is quite enough of it in the world, and far too much. Yet it is very unevenly distributed; and if some people could only exchange a good deal of their self-conceit for a little of some other people's modesty, the transaction would be one of mutual advantage. I say a good deal of the self-conceit for a little of the modesty, because the latter is much the more valuable property, and that which a man can least afford to part with. But there are men whose modesty, or at all events whose very lowly estimate of themselves rather stands in the way of their advancement, because it makes them timid. And

there are always people who, like Bunyan's *Timorous* and *Mistrust*, will tell such a man that there is "a Lion in his way;" people who will start difficulties and objections, bring forward instances of men who have failed in this and failed in that, and cover the poor man's path with all manner of hobgoblins. Perhaps it is to little purpose that one tells a timid man to try to be courageous. It is a good deal easier to plant fear in a bold man's heart than to pluck it out of the heart of a coward. But cowardice does not always proceed—does not often proceed—from that humble opinion of a man's self which is always to be respected. There are many who, with plenty of self-conceit, and with the belief that they could do anything if they tried, are shamefully afraid of every little inconvenience and annoyance they might meet with. "Like the poor cat i' th' adage," they are "loth to wet their feet." It would be well if they could be shamed out of their effeminate ways into the cultivation of manly habits.

Turning now to questions of moral and religious duty,—in regard to these, at all events, no cry of "there is a Lion in the way" should ever be allowed to stop us in our course. If it be only the path of secular progress that is in question,—the way to wealth,—the way to knowledge,—the way to fame,—perhaps it is not a matter of much consequence whether this man and that man do or do not set out upon such paths and persevere until they win the prize. But the path of duty prescribed for us by our God and by our consciences is quite another thing. I know that there are "Lions" along that path; difficulties,—plenty of them there, and sometimes dangers too, for fear of which men often halt or turn back. But let us see how some brave men have faced the "Lions" that infested their path of duty, how they have met the difficulties and the dangers that lay in the way of their doing what they believed

to be right. There were many "Lions" in the way of Moses, for what but "Lions" were the whole people of Israel when they rebelled and threatened to stone him; but the man of God, putting his trust in God, braved them all and set them at defiance. There were many "Lions" in the way of Elijah, when Ahab and his minions sought to take his life; but he never flinched from his duty, which was to rebuke those wretches for their sins. There were many "Lions" in the way of our blessed Saviour, when priests and people gnashed upon him with their teeth, thirsted for his blood, and shouted "away with him—crucify him;" but he allowed himself to be killed by them rather than retract his testimony for the truth. Surely Catholic as well as Protestant must admire the courage of Martin Luther, when, urged not to enter the town of Worms lest his enemies should destroy him, he grandly answered,— "Although there were as many devils at Worms as there are tiles upon the roofs I would enter it." When a person in authority named Justice Keeling told glorious John Bunyan that he must be had back to prison and lie there for three months, and added—"then, if you do not submit to go to church to hear Divine service and leave your preaching, you must be banished the realm, and after that, if you shall be found in this realm without license from the king, you must stretch by the neck for it,"—the undaunted tinker answered "I am at a point with you; if I were out of prison to day I would preach the Gospel again to morrow, by the help of God." "Lions in the way!" Yes, verily! Such were the men who met with "Lions" indeed; not dead ones, but living; not chained ones, but free, and full of rage and power; and the men who undauntedly faced them, and, still more, the men who, facing them, were torn to pieces by them, are the honour and glory of our race. There are no such "Lions" in the way of *our* duty;

they have all died out ; those barbarous "justices" are no more, and the barbarous laws they were commissioned to enforce have been repealed. In this country, at all events, the "Lion" of persecution is dead, and we don't expect that his roar will ever again be heard, or his bite ever again be felt in England. Still, in the way of our duty, there are some small nasty creatures which, if we don't wish to do our duty, we try to make ourselves and others believe are "Lions." 'If I tell such or such a truth I shall give offence ;' 'if I don't consent to do dishonourable and dirty things in business I shall be poor ;' 'my employer expects me to do what my conscience abhors, but, if I don't do it, I shall be turned out of my situation ;' 'I know that it is right to keep the Sabbath day ; there is something in my heart that tells me I ought to be a Godly man ; but then, if I make any profession of religion, my companions and acquaintances will laugh at me, call me a Methodist and a canting humbug, and I shall have the life of a dog amongst them.' Ah, my friend ! is not all this cowardice,—base, miserable cowardice ? Do you call these difficulties and unpleasantnesses "Lions" in your way,—these cats with their mewing, and curs with their snarling, and geese with their cackling, and snakes with their hissing ? And you call yourself a man ! You would wax mighty angry if anyone called your pluck in question ;—think of yourself and say whether you can call yourself courageous when you dare not do your duty. What if there were real "Lions" in your way ? Do you not feel that it would be right, manly, noble, to face them all and fight them all, and conquer them or be conquered by them, so long as you were trying to go in the path of duty which God's word and your own conscience point out to you ?

But "there is a Lion in the way,"—in every man's way ; &c.

least the Scripture tells us this—"Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring Lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour." In every temptation to do wrong we meet with this "roaring Lion." He often assumes other forms and looks like a lamb, and, like the "Lion" in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, he subdues his roar so that it is like the cooing of a sucking dove; but still he is the "Lion," the adversary, the destroyer, and all the more dangerous when in such treacherous disguises. But what further says the good old Book that tells us of this beast? Does it say "be afraid of him?" No. Does it say "run away from him?" No; but it says—"resist him, stand fast in the faith;" "resist him and he will flee from you,"—stand out against him and he will depart. Dr. Livingstone says that the African Lion, when encountered, "stands a second or two gazing; then turns slowly round and walks as slowly away for a dozen paces, looking over his shoulder; then begins to trot, and, when he thinks himself out of sight, bounds off like a greyhound." And so the "Lion" of temptation will make off if only you stand firmly upon the ground of conscience, saying to yourself "how can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" Says an old proverb—"Away goes the devil when he finds the door shut against him."

Yes there are "Lions" in every man's way; more of them in one man's way, fewer of them in another's,— "Lions" of difficulty and "Lions" of temptation; but it is one of the noblest efforts of our minds to kill the one class, and of our souls to resist the other.

“STRAINING OUT GNATS AND SWALLOWING CAMELS.”

It is supposed, and with good reason, that where our version of the Bible represents our Saviour as saying to the Scribes and Pharisees—“Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel,”—there is a misprint, which, having in the first edition escaped notice, has been continued until now. In previous versions the words were—“which strain out a gnat and swallow a camel,” and this is undoubtedly the true reading. For reasons which we need not now discuss, the Jews were, by their law, forbidden to eat certain kinds of creatures. Amongst the forbidden creatures were all manner of creeping things. And the stricter sort of Jews, fearing that there might be small creeping things in the water or the wine, or whatever else they drank, passed it through a strainer made of fine linen ; thus they strained out the gnat, and drank with a good conscience. The camel was also a creature which the law pronounced unclean, and which the Jews were not to eat. What would you say then of a Jew who, very careful to strain the gnat out of the water or the wine which he drank, would sit down and make a hearty dinner off the flesh of a camel? You would of course call him a hypocrite.

Now it is very possible that the men to whom Jesus spoke when he made use of this proverb would not, in literal truth, either strain out the gnat or swallow the camel ; this latter, of course, they could not do at a gulp ; but I mean that they

probably would not partake of a camel's flesh as food. But they did what was morally equivalent to such things ; that is to say, they very carefully avoided some small sins and made no bones about committing some great ones ; and, while most particular in the performance of trivial duties, they neglected duties of high importance :—thus they “paid tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin,” but “omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment and mercy and faith.” Here is a remarkable instance in which the class of men addressed by Jesus strained out the gnat and swallowed the camel. They led Jesus to the judgment hall of Pontius Pilate ; they took him thither in order that they might secure his condemnation to the cross ; they knew that he had done nothing worthy of death ; but they were determined to have his blood. With that foul and murderous purpose they led him to the judgment hall ; “but they themselves entered not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled.” They did not think how utterly defiled they were already by the falsehood, the treachery, the hatred, the cruelty that filled their filthy and abominable hearts ; they durst not cross the threshold of a Gentile's house, lest they should be defiled, but they did not scruple to demand the shedding of innocent blood. This was, surely, to strain out a gnat and swallow a camel. I will give you another instance from the Bible ; an instance in which one who, with all his faults, was a good man, did, in regard to the greatest of his faults, manifest something of the spirit indicated by our text. King David had a brave and faithful soldier who was far away from home, fighting and risking his life for his sovereign. During his absence, David seduced the brave man's wife, and then, in the most atrocious manner, contrived that the man he had so shamefully wronged should be killed in battle. A prophet went to that Royal adulterer and murderer and told

him of one of his subjects, a very rich man, who had violently taken away from a poor neighbour his one ewe lamb, and had killed it; and David's anger was greatly kindled, and he said and swore that the man who had done that deed should surely die; he would allow no such wretch as that to live within his dominions. And so he would strain out the gnat, forgetting that he had himself swallowed the camel; he would punish the smaller wrong with death, blind to the awful fact that he had himself been guilty of the greatest wrongs that it is in the power of any human being to do to his fellow-man.

And now let us see how this practice of straining out gnats and swallowing camels prevails amongst ourselves, for it would be a great mistake to suppose that the only instances of it are such as are given in the Bible.

It is a practice to which fault-finding people are much given; people who cry "brother, let me pluck the mote out of thine eye," while a beam is in their own eye; or who do what is far worse, go about telling everybody of the mote that is in such or such a person's eye, and calling attention to it. There is many a fellow who, though morally speaking he is all in rags, spends much of his time in picking holes in other men's coats. It is said that every man carries, slung over his shoulder, a wallet, in the fore part of which are his neighbours' faults, in the back part of it his own; the former he always sees, the latter seldom or never. Now by all means let us turn the wallet, and then perhaps very few of us will have the face or the conscience to dwell upon our neighbours' short-comings and misdoings; we shall perhaps find that we have swallowed too many camels to be justified in blaming our neighbour because he is not over particular in straining out gnats. I know that I am a fault-finder myself; that it is a part of my duty as a minister of religion, not indeed to go about searching for faults, but to notice them if I do see

them, and to rebuke them ; and, to tell the honest truth, my conscience has often condemned me, has accused me sometimes of the very faults that I rebuke in others, and sometimes of faults far greater. And so I beg you to understand that, while speaking on this subject, I consider myself one of my own hearers, and the hearer who, more than any other, needs the lesson that I am endeavouring to enforce. I cannot forget, and, if I could, I ought not to forget that the men to whom Jesus addressed these words—"ye strain out a gnat and swallow a camel"—were, for the most part, ministers of religion. As to fault-finding and rebuking men for their faults, let us all take heed that if we do think it our duty to say to our erring neighbour "why don't you strain out that gnat?" he may not have it in his power to retort "why do you swallow that camel?"

The mercantile world presents many instances of the practice which the words at the head of this address describe, but describe only to condemn. When a man fails for a large sum, for say £100,000, and when he is able to pay no more than three farthings in the pound, he may be said to swallow a camel; when a man fails for some trifling amount, say two or three hundred pounds, and is able to pay five or ten shillings in the pound, I think that, by comparison with the other, he only swallows a gnat. Yet this man often gets into the greater disgrace; this man is often the more hardly dealt with. As to the other, it seems to be considered something creditable that, since fail he must, he failed for so large a sum. He contrives to live on the plunder; perhaps lives just as he did before he failed,—dwelling in the same house, enjoying the same luxuries, holding up his head as high as ever in society. The other poor wretch is discarded, cut by all his former acquaintances, looked upon as a broken down and ruined man, and no one has a word to say for him. You have only to play the rogue

on a scale sufficiently large ; you have only to be a thief and a robber in a very extensive way ; to tell big lies, not little ones ; to cook big accounts, not little ones ; to steal, not a loaf of bread or a pocket handkerchief, but a good many thousands of pounds, and if a good many tens of thousands, so much the better. You have only to do more pilfering yourself than has ever been done by all the inmates of the Borough Gaol, and you will be all right : no one will injure you ; few will speak evil of you ; you shall still drive your carriage ; you shall still keep your dozen servants ; you shall still give your dinner parties ; you shall, as before, preside at a missionary meeting, take the chair at some lecture for a religious society, and sit on the bench sending to prison men who, compared with yourself, are models of honesty. But mind that it is a *camel* you swallow. Strain out the gnat,—the man who swallows the gnat is a stupid bungler ; swallow the *camel* and the very people whose the camel was will forgive you, perhaps admire you ; at all events you can set them at defiance. And some of these men who have swallowed the camel, though certainly not all of them, have strained out the gnat. There are smaller iniquities which they have been careful not to do. They have paid their servants their wages ; the char-woman has not been defrauded of her hire ; the greengrocer and the fishmonger have had their bills settled. Perhaps the tailor is done out of his money, and the silk-mercant has rather a heavy account against the camel swallower's wife—still most of the gnats are strained out, most of the small debts are paid. Perhaps, too, he has not swallowed the whole camel. We often see that proverb verified, — “to steal a goose and give the giblets in alms.” So with the camel ; he is not all swallowed from his head to his hoofs. “Men cut broad thongs out of other people's leather,” says the proverb ; and so there is a donation of £50

to this charity, and another of £100 to that ; a large sum figures in the report of the Bible Society ; our friend contributes largely to schools ; with princely magnificence he lays the foundation-stone of a church belonging to his own denomination, and as in these days bigotry is out of fashion, and we should help in every good cause, he goes the next week and lays 20 guineas on the foundation-stone of a church connected with some other body of Christians. "The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination ; how much more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind." One way in which the camel, however large, is swallowed is this—a man, by hook or by crook, by the latter especially, contrives to get hold of property, not a farthing of which belongs to him ; he settles it upon his wife, and then it can't be touched. Now, if there be any truth in the saying that "the receiver is as bad as the thief," what are we to say of the woman on whom such a settlement is made ? Surely if a man is determined to go to the devil, he need not insist upon it that his wife shall accompany him ; but the camel must be swallowed at any cost, though it be at the cost of a man's own wife's good name.

Another example of straining out gnats and swallowing camels may be seen in the fact that many people think a great deal more of good manners than of good morals. Manners and morals once meant one and the same thing. At all events, where St. Paul says "evil communications corrupt good manners," he, evidently, by good manners, means good morals. But manners and morals are now not commonly understood to be identical. A man may have very good manners and shockingly bad morals ; or his manners may be rather bad and his morals very good. I say his manners may in this case be *rather* bad, because I believe that, where the morals are very good, the manners cannot be altogether and utterly bad. If a

man's heart be right, you may in most things trust him for his behaviour. If his heart be right he will be humble, and therefore there will be no impudence in his manners; he will be self-respectful, and therefore there will be no crawling servility in his manners; he will be devout, and therefore there will be no profane levity in his manners; he will be temperate and chaste, and therefore there will be no licentiousness in his manners; he will be kind, and therefore there will be no selfishness in his manners. A corrupt tree may bring forth what looks like good fruit, but "a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit." In a right-hearted man's manners there may be an awkwardness and a clumsiness, and he may, in his ignorance, or perhaps in his blunt honesty, transgress some of the rules, many of them more nice than wise, which good society, as it is called, lays down for our behaviour; still, in a right-hearted man's manners there can hardly be anything which another right-hearted man would consider very bad. Such a man has, by nature or by God's grace, so much of the makings of a gentleman in him that his offence against good manners will, for the most part, be very trivial and very pardonable; his good morals will save him from everything unbearably bad in manners. But, in many instances, morals and manners have been divorced and dwell quite apart. Where morals are bad, manners would also be bad, but that art and artifice step in to correct them and set them right; and men are taught to put on a mannerly behaviour which often contradicts the feelings of the soul. Anyhow, it does come to this—that faultless manners often cover a very filthy and rotten heart; and to this—that some people prefer such a heart, if so covered, to the purest and the soundest that lacks such a covering. A gentlemanly rake will be thought more of by such persons than a man of ever such correct morals who has not the polished manners

of the so-called gentleman ; indeed, I do not know but that, in some circles, the gentlemanly rake would be preferred to the virtuous man, however gentlemanly he might be. But to be guilty of a false aspirate, that is—to pronounce the “h” in the word *hour*, to say *harm* where you ought to say *arm*—is worse than to take the name of God in vain. You may be well known to be a libertine, a gambler, a profane swearer, a despiser of all morality and all religion ; you may be well known to have done in business things worse than such as have sent many a better man to the gallows ; yet, for all this, if your manners be gentlemanly, you shall be welcomed where a poor fellow, whose only offence is that he sometimes puts his knife to his mouth in eating his dinner, would in vain look for admittance. Now is not this a case of straining out the gnat and swallowing the camel ? And when the camel happens to be well laden with gold, it matters not how old and nasty he is, there are those who will be delighted to swallow him. Strain out, by all means, the gnat of bad manners, but don't swallow the camel of bad morals.

Religion, or rather what passes and has passed for religion, offers many illustrations of straining out gnats and swallowing camels. I hope I need not say that true religion allows no such thing as the swallowing of the gnat. If by gnats and camels I am to understand sins lesser and greater, true religion sternly forbids both—sternly forbids all. The wicked thought may be regarded as the lesser sin, the wicked deed as the greater ; and there is truth in the distinction, because the wicked thought may injure none but him who thinks it, the wicked deed is an injury to both the doer of it and him to whom it is done. But you do not find that religion, as taught in the Bible, allows the former while it forbids the latter. It says some very strong things about those evil thoughts which many people, perhaps, regard as no more than gnats compared with the camels of evil deeds. Gnats,

mere trifles, not worth speaking of, as you may consider these thoughts,—the religion of the Bible, eager to nip evil in the bud and kill it in the birth, says that “he that hateth his brother is a murderer;” that “whosoever looketh on a woman, to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart;” that “covetousness is idolatry.” The Bible knows no such distinction between gnats and camels as would wink at our not straining out the former provided we don’t swallow the latter. It is as strong in warning us against little sins as against great ones; or, rather, it does not allow us to think of any sin as little; it has too great a regard for God’s honour and for our good to afford the slightest encouragement to any form or degree of evil, whether in thought, word, or deed. In reference to duties, it requires us to be faithful even in that which is least; and, speaking of the weightier and the lighter matters of the Divine law, it says,—“these things ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone.” And therefore, in what I may say about professedly religious people straining out the gnat and swallowing the camel, I find no fault with their straining out the gnat, provided it really be a gnat, which in this little parable or proverb stands for some sin which, compared with some others, may by many people be considered little.

There are folk, then, who strain out the gnat in regard to religious ceremony, but swallow almost any camel in regard to religious doctrine. They are particular to a nicety that all things connected with religious worship should be done “decently and in order.” Perhaps they introduce a good many rather trivial observances at which strong-headed people smile; such as putting the men on one side of a church and the women on the other; going through the service, not in a natural and manly voice, but with a whine like that of a

whipped dog ; observing, with great care, certain days of feasting and of fasting. Well now, this sort of thing strikes me as a straining out of gnats, and to a certain extent, perhaps, it is very right and good ; to this extent at least,—the careful avoidance of what is irreverent and unseemly in connection with Christian worship. There are churches and chapels the dirt and nastiness of which are an abominable disgrace. And there are very slovenly ways of conducting what is called Divine service, but is, when so conducted, anything but divine. But often those who are so very nice about form and order and ceremony are prepared to accept, and do accept, doctrines which one would suppose it rather hard for people of good sense to swallow ; and, as a general rule, those who are most particular in regard to ceremonial are most gullible in regard to doctrine. Sunday is a subject on which there has been much straining out of gnats, and it is to be feared much swallowing of camels too. “ You must not whistle on the Sabbath day,” said a severe looking man to a little boy, who one Sunday morning was guilty of the offence for which he was reprovèd ; the reprover was drunk before night. I think that it is straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel when a man holds that it is sinful in a printer to work in the printing office on Sunday night, and yet reads the paper on Monday morning. And it is straining out the gnat and swallowing the camel when a man would not read a newspaper on Sunday, but spends a great part of that day in thinking and talking about the very things which the newspaper contains. And I think you will agree with me that it is straining out the gnat and swallowing the camel when we put down almost every kind of trade on a Sunday, and yet, just excepting three or four hours, we give full freedom to that trade in strong drink which is the disgrace, the curse, and threatens to be the ruin of the country. “ Sir,”

says the law to the baker, "you shall not sell a loaf of bread ;" to all the licensed victuallers it says—"Gentlemen, you are at perfect liberty to sell any quantity of beer, whisky, brandy, or gin your customers may desire, only observe the canonical hours." Almost all other trade is stopped out of a regard to religion ; but the trade that makes men drunk, that sends them home to beat their wives, that starves their children, that unfits them to go to work on the Monday morning,—that trade, forsooth, must be selected as the one that is to be favoured with freedom on the Sunday. Sirs, if we are to have a choice of evils, it were better that every other shop in the town were open on Sunday from morning to night, than that the gin shops should be open for ten minutes. I do not say that Sunday trading in bread, in butcher's meat, in sugar and tea, in linen and calico, would be no more than a gnat. I should be exceedingly sorry to see any extension whatever of Sunday trading ; I should like every man to have his one day's perfect rest in seven ; but, if any shop is to be opened on Sunday, I would say don't let it be the shop that turns men into beasts and devils, and fills the poor-houses and the prisons. If the rule be "thou shalt do no manner of work," and if convenience and necessity demand that this rule shall be relaxed, and that some exceptions be admitted, then I would say,—make exceptions in the case of poor wretches who can hardly scrape enough on six days to keep body and soul together ; don't make an exception in favour of that work which is so injurious to the peace and safety and general welfare of society. Now only imagine some poor mortal, who has tried to turn a penny by some small Sunday trading, brought up before a magistrate who is a brewer. The culprit has earned perhaps eighteen-pence, and he has done no serious injury to anybody ; the magistrate has, in his various

public-houses, netted, possibly, a hundred pounds on that same day; the filth sold by him has made some hundreds of blockheads sick,—deprived them, for the time, of the little atom of sense they had; some of them have to be taken care of by the police, being quite incapable of taking care of themselves; others of them quarrel and shout and fight in the streets between eleven on Sunday night and three on Monday morning; the greater part of them are sure to be away from their work, perhaps, until Tuesday. His worship, the brewer, inflicts a fine upon the fellow who has done a little trade for a bare living: might not the man at the bar turn upon the man upon the bench and say, “you hypocrite, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel; first cast the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast the mote out of mine!”

There are people also who, in regard to religion, strain out gnats in doctrine and swallow camels in practice. They are strictly and severely orthodox, and can detect the very slightest taint of heresy; they are thoroughly sound in the faith. A man of the sort I am now describing thinks much of the death of Jesus Christ, but little of his life; is glad to regard him as a Saviour,—fights very shy of him as a teacher and as an example. Religion is, with him, something to be believed rather than something to be lived. He has been careful to strain out of his creed every gnat of what he considers to be error. It would be well if in regard to his conduct he were half as particular as he is in regard to his creed,—if he saw that there is an orthodoxy in practice, which is quite as important, in the sight of God and man, as orthodoxy in doctrine. But this he does not see, probably will not see; and the result is that he swallows many a camel in the shape of untruthfulness and dishonesty, of unkindness and severity and covetousness. Now it is worthy of observation, as showing how little ground

such men have for their carefulness with reference to doctrine, and their comparative indifference with reference to practice, that the greatest teachers of Christian doctrine are also the greatest teachers of Christian morals. The greater part of our Saviour's instructions bear not upon creed but upon practice. The Sermon on the Mount is far more a code of pure morality than a deliverance upon theology. So with the apostle Paul; or if in his case the doctrinal occupies a more prominent position than in the teaching given by Christ, still this apostle, far more than any other, dwells upon the practical duties of religion. It is this man, who has so much to say about justification by faith, about salvation by grace, about election, about adoption, about regeneration, about every doctrine in the Christian system; it is this very man who writes thus,—“render unto all their dues;” “owe no man anything, but to love one another;” “provide things honest in the sight of all men;” “lie not one to another;” “be not slothful in business;” “masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal;” “servants, obey your masters, and render all good fidelity;” “husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them;” “children, obey your parents;” “charge them who are rich * * * * * that they do good;” “and be ye kind one to another, forgiving one another, as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.” Paul did strain out what many people in these times may consider mere gnats of erroneous doctrine, but he also certainly did his utmost to prevent our swallowing the camels of sinful practice; and I do not believe that there is a single duty towards God or man for which you could not find, in his writings, some good, plain, strong word of exhortation.

Gnats and camels, little failings and great ones,—all are bad, all are to be avoided. It was not the straining out of gnats that Jesus condemned; he strained out gnats himself; no other

person, indeed, ever strained out so many, for he was just as free from the lesser as from the greater offences against virtue and godliness. What he condemned was the blindness, the one-sidedness, the hypocrisy of straining out the gnat on the part of men who swallowed the camel. There are some who strain out the gnat and swallow the camel ; some who swallow the gnat and can't stomach the camel ; some who swallow both ; the proper course is to have as little as possible to do with anything unclean, with anything forbidden, be it great or small.

“THE ENGLISHMAN’S HOUSE IS HIS CASTLE.”

The meaning of this saying is that an Englishman’s house,—whether great or small, whether magnificent or mean, whether the palace of a nobleman or the cottage of a ploughman,—is so guarded and protected by the law that, as a general rule, it shall be entered by no one against the will of its occupant; that even the officers of the Government shall have no right to invade it by their presence, excepting under very rare and peculiar circumstances; and that, even then, they shall proceed very cautiously, lest they involve themselves in very serious legal consequences. There are some countries in which it is very common for the police to pay what are called domiciliary visitations; that is to say, they very unceremoniously demand, and, if refused, very unceremoniously enforce admission to a man’s house, if there be the least suspicion that there is within its walls any person disaffected to the Government, or that any papers containing the correspondence of such a person can be found there. In this country personal liberty is too jealously preserved to allow of such a state of things; and, happily, the loyalty of the people renders such police power and interference altogether unnecessary. Perhaps, indeed, we carry the rule of the Englishman’s house being his Castle too far in some cases; for, unless something about as bad

as murder is going on in a house, a policeman can hardly be induced to enter it, lest he should encroach upon an Englishman's liberty to act like a madman or a wild beast,—a liberty in which he very often indulges himself. There certainly is one very marked exception to the rule of the Englishman's house being his Castle, and that is when the bailiffs are in it. How these fellows get into an Englishman's house I do not know, and I must say I hope I never shall know ; but I am told that, like some other and smaller but hardly less agreeable inmates, once they are in it is very hard to get them out. Happily, however, there is a very simple way of keeping them out. Pay your way, and your house will never be invaded by the bailiffs.

A Castle was, in old times, a strongly fortified place that belonged to the crown or to some great person, and was intended for defence. It was often planted on some rocky height, which an enemy could not, without difficulty, scale. It was strongly built with towers and bulwarks and ramparts ; it was generally surrounded by a deep trench that could be filled with water ; and the entrance was by a drawbridge, through a massive gateway fortified with a portcullis, which was a huge and heavy grating made of timber and iron. In those castles, the remains of which, in various stages of decay, may be seen all over the country, the bold barons of England dwelt in olden time ; leading a somewhat rude and boisterous life, devoting themselves to hunting and eating and drinking, lording it strongly over their miserable serfs whose wretched dens were built round their castle walls, and occasionally sallying forth to fight or to plunder some rival chieftain. Those times have passed away, and a castle now is generally not a place of defence, but a very magnificent dwelling-house, in which resides, possibly, a Royal personage ;

possibly a nobleman ; possibly a bishop ; possibly a gentleman of some old country family ; possibly a county squire, very proud and very poor ; possibly a wealthy iron master ; possibly a retired dealer in earthenware ; possibly an ex-director of a burst bubble company ; possibly the greatest rogue and swindler known in the commercial world ; or, possibly, the castle, like Castle Mona in the town of Douglas, once a ducal residence, has become a public-house. Anyhow, the word Castle is now commonly understood to mean, not a place of defence, but a house of unusual dimensions, magnificence, and comfort.

So far as this last element, comfort, is concerned, I wish that every Englishman's house, and just as cordially that every Scotchman's and every Irishman's house, had rather more of the Castle about it and in it than it has. When one looks at Windsor Castle, Penrhyn Castle, Arundel Castle, Alnwick Castle, and then at the dark, dirty, miserable dens in which such myriads of our people live, it sounds like mockery to say—the Englishman's house is his Castle. In such cases neither the idea of defence nor the idea of comfort finds much realization in the Englishman's house ; for, as to defence, the place scarcely keeps out the wind and the rain ; and as to comfort, there is often none at all, but very much of its opposite. And as to the *poor* Irishman's house being his Castle ! Why what is the *poor* Irishman's house ? Well, sometimes it is as good, as clean, as neat as any poor Englishman's house ; but sometimes, I do not say through whose fault, the poor Irishman's house is a disgrace to our much vaunted civilization. If a man were wrecked upon some part of the Irish coast, not knowing exactly on what land he had been cast, he might suppose, from the kindness of the poor people, that he had fallen amongst angels, but, from the character of their habitations, that he had been drifted to the shore of some country inhabited by savages.

The poor Irishman's house, as I have often seen it, is just this—a hole twenty feet long, twelve feet wide, and six feet deep; cut on three sides out of a turf bog, built up with earth and boulder stones in the front, and covered with sticks, sods, and rushes. It is hard in such a case to think of Windsor, and say seriously,—the Irishman's house is his Castle. And yet, with plenty of sweet country air about them; or blown upon all day by the fresh wind from the sea, and with a charming stream of the purest water in the world leaping and murmuring past, and with no whiskey-shop within five miles, I do not know but that those poor habitations, with all that they contain, the pig included, are healthier and better places to live in than those that form, for miles, the working-men's streets and lanes in many of our large towns. Never in my travels in Ireland and in the Highlands of Scotland, and I have seen a great deal of both countries,—never did I, at least in the rural parts of those lands, see a cottage, a hut, or a hovel in which I should have been so unwilling to have my food or to spend the night as I should be to eat or to sleep in some poor folks' houses that I have seen in Liverpool, in London, and in Glasgow. In the matter of a dwelling the agricultural labourer is not very well off; his cottage is often very wretched, a place in which not only comfort but decency is almost impossible; a place in which it would serve aright the great landowner who allows it to exist that he should be made to live for a week, if he could survive the experiment; perhaps he would then have a livelier sense of his duty to the poor. But for us who live in towns so to speak on this subject as if the agricultural labourer were especially badly off, would be for the pot to call the kettle black. I say not at whose door the fault lies; but there is something wrong somewhere, or we should never have such multitudes of our people stowed away in those stifling holes and corners, in

which, though they exist, they can hardly be said to live. The Englishman's house is his Castle ; perhaps so ; but I think that, as his house is built in one of some hundreds of streets that I could name, or in a court off one of those streets, it is far nearer the mark to say that the Englishman's house is his grave.

And this sad view of the subject calls to my mind the name of one who, though, to our great sorrow, he has been taken from us, will ever be gratefully remembered as one who did his best to provide decent and comfortable houses for the working people. He was not a nobleman, with a great estate worth £1,000 a day, left him by his ancestors ; he was not a manufacturer, employing some thousands of workpeople, whose condition a man in such circumstances might well be led to consider and to compassionate ; he was not by birth even an Englishman ; of course I speak of George Peabody. He bestowed his more than princely gifts, so far as this country is concerned, chiefly upon the poor of London, to provide them with better houses. Well, he lived in London, and charity begins at home, and let every man do his most and best for the people amongst whom he lives. A few men something like him,—it is too much to expect even a few very like him, either in purse or in heart,—but a few men something like him, turning their attention and their benevolence to similar undertakings, would soon effect a wonderful revolution, and put some very real comfort into the thought that the Englishman's house is his Castle—his Castle, and not as I have said his grave, which in too many cases it is.

Still, however humble and however inconvenient an Englishman's house is, there is truth in the saying that it is his Castle. It cannot, save in the exceptional cases which I have mentioned, be invaded even by the Government. The self-same law that protects the residence of a duke or an earl

protects the cottage beneath whose humble roof resides the labouring man. And as long as he keeps the peace, harbours no bad characters, and pays his way, neither policeman nor bailiff will trouble him with his presence. I now fall back upon the old idea of a Castle as a place of defence, a place in which a man shuts himself up, and sets his enemies at defiance; and I wish to show how, in a somewhat though not exactly similar sense, every man's house may be and ought to be his Castle. From visitations of the police, and invasions by bailiffs, I shall suppose you free; and free also from much danger of being attacked by burglars; there may not be much in your house for which a burglar would think it worth while to exercise his craft, or to run the risk of transportation. So far you are safe. But there are enemies whom you must do your best to keep out of that Castle of yours; for they will get in if they can, and prove far worse customers to deal with than policemen or bailiffs, or even burglars. As to the police, I beg their pardon for associating them in the same sentence with either of the other parties, for in fact the police are the men who watch and guard our houses during the night; their office, so far from being the invasion of our Castles, is their protection.

Your house is your Castle. Then, my friend, for one thing, I would say, don't let it be invaded and entered by people who will do you and your family no good; who will unprofitably occupy your time; who will spend a whole evening in small talk, and in foolish and mischievous tittle-tattle about their neighbours; who will tempt you also, in your kind-heartedness, to spend more than you can afford on their entertainment; and who, when you have done your best for them, will probably think you a fool or a screw, and go somewhere else to talk to your dispraise. I do not want to discourage neighbour-

liness ; but I believe that neighbours are likely to be upon the best terms when they remember the proverb "love thy neighbour, but don't pull down thy hedge." It is well to keep even a neighbour at some little distance, and you ought not to growl if your neighbour does the same to you. One might almost as well live in the market-place as not be able to have one's house to oneself ; but there are people who are always thrusting their noses into the houses of their friends. Come they will, to pass an hour or two, supposing that you are as idle as they are themselves ; or it may be that they come to borrow money, or to ask you to become security for them. I would not counsel the rudeness of slamming the door in any man's face ; but really there are some who might be the better of a hint that, though the door may be opened to them, it will be opened with a good deal of reluctance. Never say you are not at home when you are at home, for that would be telling a lie, and a cowardly lie too ; but be bold enough to say that you are too much engaged to be seen ; at all events, if it be your misfortune to have acquaintances of this troublesome sort, manage them in such a way that the house shall be yours and not theirs. It would be well if such persons as I have described would study Matthew Henry's words upon this subject of neighbourly intercourse—"we should not go too often, nor stay too long, nor contrive to come at meal time." When a person is always dropping in, as he says, it is a drop too much ; or, possibly enough, it is a drop too much that he comes for.

Your house is your Castle ;—then, my friend, if you are a working man, take good care that you keep Poverty out of it. I say if you are a working man, though I do not know that such an *if* is necessary ; for there are others who find it hard enough to keep this enemy out of their Castles ; but, generally,

it is the working man who is least prepared to withstand it. And a terrible enemy it is. It comes into a house and lays hold first on one article of furniture and then on another ; it takes the man's watch, and his wife's shawl, and his children's shoes ; everything, in many instances, has to go for bare bread to eat. To many a working man, a few weeks of easterly wind would be almost as bad as if a hostile fleet were to come into the river and bombard the town. Keep out this hungry and rapacious enemy Poverty, which spares neither age nor sex, which will attack, not you alone, but your wife and your children. "Yes," you say, "but it is more easily said than done." I know it is ; but it may be done ; at all events it may be done in many cases in which it is not done. But losing morning quarters is not the way to do it ; and spending half your wages in drink is not the way to do it ; and being turned out of your situation through unsteadiness is not the way to do it ; and getting finer clothes than are necessary is not the way to do it ; and feasting and cramming when you happen to have rather more money than usual is not the way to do it ; and buying upon trust is not the way to do it ; and borrowing is not the way to do it. There are many who know exactly how not to do it. But he who knows how not to do it ought to know how to do it also. It is very simple ; it is just this—to turn his course of conduct upside down ; to adopt practices just the opposite to those which, if he have a grain of common sense, he must see are bringing the enemy poverty nearer and nearer to him. In old times a Castle was a place that could stand a siege for a good long time. The enemy carefully watched it, and would not allow a morsel of food to be conveyed to it ; but such a store of provisions had been laid up in it that there was no great fear of starvation, as long as the garrison took care not to be wasteful. And a siege every man's house ought, if possible,

to be able to stand ; not, of course, through an actual laying up of provisions within its walls, but through its occupants having been careful in good times to prepare for bad times. An Englishman's house hardly deserves to be called his Castle if at any moment gaunt poverty may enter its door.

Your house is your Castle ;—then, by all means, keep Dirt out of it. Castles in olden times were, I dare say, dirty enough ; but dirt is not tolerated in Castles now ; cleanliness reigns throughout such places. And you will say “so it ought, where there are so many servants who have nothing else to do than attend to such matters ; but it is a very different case when a poor man's wife has to do all the work of the house.” Well, so it is ; but there *are* poor men's houses that, for cleanliness, will stand comparison with any rich man's house ; and this just shews that dirt can be kept out if people really hate it, and count it an enemy, and treat it as such.

Your house is your Castle ;—then keep disease out of it. “Nay,” you say, “that must be as God shall please ; we can do nothing in regard to that.” Can't you though ? I do not wish to be irreverent ; I know that God does permit disease and death too to enter houses in which every precaution is taken. But don't suppose that whenever sickness invades a house it is because God so pleases. God does so ordain that, if we set at nought His laws, sickness shall enter our homes. There is some transgression of His laws at the root of all disease ; some one has, either in ignorance or in wilfulness, so transgressed ; and hence this suffering, the sufferers themselves, probably enough, not being at all to blame. The situation and construction of the house may, of course, be such and often are such as to make health almost impossible. What a curiosity a true and faithful advertisement of such a place would be ! It might read thus :—

HIGHLY UNDESIRABLE RESIDENCE.—A HOUSE, situated in a Court off a Back Street, in the lowest part of the Town. In front it commands a prospect of other houses, at the distance of $4\frac{1}{2}$ yards ; there is no ground at the back ; a gutter runs through the centre of the Court, and just beneath the windows of the house is a large cess-pool. Excepting for a few hours of the day, in the height of Summer, not a ray of sunlight falls upon the house. In the immediate neighbourhood there are foundries, chemical works, gas works, and places for the killing and skinning of superannuated horses ; the air is, consequently, loaded with a great variety of odours. The Court in which this highly ineligible residence stands, being entered by a low and narrow passage, the locality is completely sheltered from every wind that blows. The inhabitants of the houses adjoining the property are remarkable for their filthy habits. For many years the Court has never been free from sickness. The last tenant of the house now advertised died of typhus fever, after having lost, in the same house, three of his children in the small-pox and his wife by cholera. This residence is well worthy of the attention of any person desirous of losing his health and shortening his days.—For further particulars, apply to PAIN AND DEATH, House Agents, Old Churchyard.

Now if that is the sort of house a man lives in,—and, I say it with deep sorrow, I do in my soul believe that the description applies to thousands and thousands of the houses (if the places are worthy of the name) inhabited by working people,—I say, if that is the sort of a house a man lives in, then I fear it is almost a mockery to say,—keep disease out of it ; the best thing to say is,—keep yourself out of it ; keep every living thing out of it ; for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals might well interfere to prevent either cat or dog, or anything better than a rat, from being immured in such a horrible dungeon. However, be the house what it may, still do your best to bar it against disease. If you can and do keep out the two last mentioned enemies, poverty and dirt, you do a good deal towards excluding sick-

ness. Let in fresh air. "Ah, but," you say, "where is the fresh air to come from? From those gas-works, knackers' yards, and cess-pools?" My poor friend,—there you have me; God help you to get away from such a worse than beastly place. God send us a George Peabody to make health possible amongst our labouring people. Lately, when for days and weeks I roamed over Scottish moors and mountains, drinking in the divine air from the breezy Atlantic, I thought of some of my poor fellow-townsmen who know no more of air like that than they do of grouse or of venison; and I said to myself,—surely we have, in some way, made a miserable mess of this beautiful world, in that this free and glorious gift of God, so life-giving, so invigorating, so cheering, and so abundant,—enough for 1,000 times the world's population to breathe,—in that, before it reaches many of our poor people, it is spoiled and half poisoned.

"God made the country and man made the town," and a wretched place, for the most part, man has made it. Still, whatever can be done, let it be done, to keep out the enemy disease. Study some good plain rules of health. There is an admirable collection of such rules lately published by Dr. Turner of the Liverpool Royal Institution. You can get it for a shilling; and it is a shilling's worth, indeed a great many shillings' worth of defensive armour against a whole host of diseases, and sufferings, and sorrows. Get that; it costs no more than a morning quarter or half a dozen glasses of bad beer. Study and apply these plain, sensible rules as well as you can. Be temperate, be frugal, be cleanly, and, to quote Dr. Turner's advice,—“do your best to keep a clear conscience, an even temper, a light heart, and a good digestion,” and disease will not often invade you; and, if it do come, you will be in some measure prepared to meet and to master it.

“Keep an even temper,” says Dr. Turner. Your house is your Castle ; keep all bad temper and quarrelling out of it. I dare say there were rows enough in the Castles of the old nobility ; for their lordships were rather a rough set, or, at all events, had rather rough people about them. Still, a Castle was for defence against enemies without, not a place for quarrelling within the walls. Bad temper is one of the very worst foes you can admit to your house. It is enough to spoil the best dinner that ever was set before a man ; for, as Solomon says,—“Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a stalled ox and hatred therewith ;” and “ Better is a dry morsel with quietness than a house full of good cheer with strife.” The leaven of malice will make all enjoyments bitter. There is an old motto to this purport:—“None but cats and dogs are allowed to quarrel in my house.” I would not allow even such brutes to quarrel there, if I could help it. Let there be no peevishness, no sullenness, no severity, no cross words, no angry looks ; there is quite fighting enough to be done in the world outside ; there ought to be peace at home. How miserable some homes are, just because the inmates have short and hasty tempers, or sulky and disagreeable tempers. Neither poverty nor sickness can make us half so unhappy as we can make ourselves and one another if we give way to evil tempers. And keep bad language out of the house, and bad manners, and bad conduct of every sort. There is a kind of castle that I have not mentioned, or, rather, a use of castles which I have omitted to state ;—they are sometimes used as prisons ; very forbidding places, containing very forbidding characters ; places in which no word of kindness is ever heard ; places which it would be very horrible to live in. Some men’s houses are not much better ; they have all the moral wretchedness of a prison, and that without its cleanliness, its discipline, and its order. Let

us mind not to make our houses, in this sense, castles to our children, places from which, by reason of harshness and severity, they would be glad to make their escape. Many a prodigal son has only had too much reason to run away from home; and many a daughter has made a miserable match, or perhaps done worse, to escape the prison-like severity often experienced under the parental roof.

Certainly "Castle" does seem to be a word too big, too grand, too proud, to be applied to an ordinary house, and especially to the poor little dwelling of a working-man. If, in a legal sense, it be applicable to every Englishman's house, because of the perfect security that such a house enjoys in common with the palaces of noblemen, yet, in an architectural sense, the application of the word to poor men's houses, which are often only half a brick in thickness and ready to tumble upon the heads of their inmates, seems absurd; and in a social sense no less so. Nevertheless, there is no doubt of this, that, as the poor man's house is a place of as great security as the most magnificent abode that bears the name of Castle, so it *may* be the scene of almost as much genuine comfort and happiness. For "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth;" and if in the habitations of the great there are many luxuries unknown in the habitations of the poor, there are also many cares in the former to which the latter are total strangers. But, taking the word Castle as denoting a place of defence, I think it is very fairly applicable to every man's house as suggestive of the duty of keeping out of our houses every enemy to our peace and to our happiness. In conclusion, I may add that the best protection of all for any man's house is this, that there should be in it the fear of God, the love of true religion. Indeed I might say more than this; I might say that God himself dwells in the house

that opens its door to Him,—dwells in its inmates' hearts; and there is no such protection as that. The best armour wherewith to defend the Castle against all foes is "the armour of God;" "the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left;" "the shield of faith" and "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." The law can make your house secure from violence, more free from all danger of invasion than ever was any Castle of bygone times; that is much, but that is about all that the law can do; and, this done, the house, as you well know, may be a very miserable place,—invaded, entered, mastered, robbed by enemies whom neither police nor soldiery have the slightest power to resist. These enemies the Gospel can keep out, or, if it find them in, can turn out; these, or, at all events, most of them and the worst of them,—bad temper and bad behaviour, selfishness, wrath, strife, intemperance, extravagance, idleness; and these being kept out, poverty, dirt, and even disease are likely to be kept out too. Legal security is the idea intended by the expression—the Englishman's house is his Castle; but I think it will be seen that much more than legal security may be denoted by it, if we use our best endeavours to guard against admitting to our houses those evil companions, evil passions and evil habits, which are our most subtle and most dangerous foes.

"I CAN'T HELP IT."

You can't! Can't you? Well, we shall see; but often, very often, when a man says that he can't help it, his meaning is that he *won't* help it, that he does not even wish to help it, or that, at all events, he does not like the bother and the trouble of helping it. Far more frequently is "I can't help it" a lame excuse for indolence than an honest confession of downright powerlessness. If every one, on meeting with a difficulty, had sat down with his head in his hand, gloomily and despairingly saying "I can't help it," I should like to know what would have become of the world, and what state it would have been in. It is bad enough as things are, but if "I can't help it" had been the rule it would have been infinitely worse. So beware of "I can't help it." The state of mind which this expression discovers is very dangerous. If you don't take care it will stunt your mental growth, it will stop your progress in everything good; and, if you give way to it, that which is now only an excuse for indolence will become only too true a statement of your inability to do what you ought to do, and to become what you ought to become. Give "I can't help it" its way, and, from being nothing but unwillingness, it will grow to be powerlessness.

Still there are, of course, some things,—yea, many things,—of which a man may say and must say that he can't help them. He "can't help it" if he stand only 4 feet 11 inches high. He "can't help it" if his hair be the colour of a carrot. He

"can't help it" if he have a cast in his eye. He "can't help it" if he be as blind as a stone or as deaf as a post. He "can't help it" if he be hunchbacked, or if he be lame. He "can't help it" if he inherit from his ancestors a feeble constitution. He "can't help it" if he have not great intellectual powers ; and, poor fellow, he "can't help it" if he be an idiot. Such things as these we set aside as things which a man "can't help." Some of them are things which a man can submit to without much inconvenience. If a man "can't help" his lowness of stature ; if, excepting by dyeing his hair, he "can't help" its being of a colour that he does not admire, — well, these are not matters of much importance. The cast in the eye certainly is a misfortune, but as long as it does not seriously interfere with a man's sight, it can be patiently borne. As to other and more serious bodily defects which a man "can't help," those who labour under them deserve our compassion, and still more those who are seriously defective in mental power. And such as—by reason of these infirmities, whether of body or of mind—"can't help" themselves must be helped by others, who shall, like good old Job, be "eyes to the blind and feet to the lame ;" and nothing should give us greater pleasure than to help, in all ways in our power, those who cannot help themselves. God's providence casts them upon us, and we should take them as the charge which our Maker has committed to our care. I hope, then, that if I should say some rather hard things upon this common saying "I can't help it," it will be clearly understood that I except every case in which "I can't help it" is an honest and a sufficient excuse. It is only where "I can't help it" means "I won't help it," that I give it no quarter, and show it no mercy.

Now there are some things which it may be true enough

that a man "can't help," but which he might have helped. For example—I dare say there is too much reason to suppose that there is at least one poor fellow here who has an ill-tempered wife, and another who has a brainless wife, and another who has a slatternly wife, and, possibly, another who has a drunken wife; and each of these unhappy men says "I can't help it." Well, perhaps you can't and perhaps you can; I shall come to this question just now. But, granted that you "can't help it," that your wives are what they are,—it is very certain that you could have helped it one time. There was no law to compel you to marry them, or, if you felt in duty bound to marry them when you had promised to do so, there was no law to compel you to make such a promise. You "can't help it!" no, you can't, and I am very sorry for you; but you could have helped it. But, says one, perhaps says everyone of these unfortunate husbands,—"No! I could not help it. I had no reason when I married my wife to suppose that she would turn out as she has done. You yourself, Reverend Sir, with all your professions of sagacity, would have been deceived,—you would have thought her a perfect angel." Well, my friend, it is quite possible, and I may be too hard upon you. Perhaps I ought to admit not only that you cannot help it now, but that you could not help it at any time. But there are men who, taken by a pretty face and an engaging manner, wilfully shut their eyes to every mental and moral defect, and bind themselves for life to women who, if they had only used a little common sense, they might have foreseen would be a plague and a torment; and then they say they "can't help it. The same thing is true on the other side. There are women who have ill-tempered, drunken, idle, vicious husbands, and they "can't help it,"—at least so they think, and so it may be; but more of this just now. But they could have helped it, at least in some cases;

they knew the character of the men who wished to marry them, or they might have known their character ; a little prudence would have saved them all this wretchedness. Take another case of what can't be helped, but might have been helped,—that is, might have been avoided and escaped. A man is broken down in health,—the doctor gives no hope of his recovery or of his living long ; he is comparatively young ; so far as years are concerned he ought to be at the very top of his strength. But there he is, not yet forty, perhaps not thirty, a poor feeble creature, incapable of working, a burden to his friends. And on inquiry it turns out that he has brought all this upon himself by a reckless, intemperate, vicious course of life ; by giving way to the impulses of his appetites and his passions ; by associating with bad company. He “can't help it” now ; no, poor wretch, he can't ; and all the care and all the art and all the skill in the world “can't help it” now ; but he could have helped it easily enough. Two years ago “I can't help it” meant “I *won't* help it,” but now “I can't help it” means “I *can't* help it ;” and so with many a case of abject poverty. A man is in the poor-house, fed and clothed by the parish. He “can't help it ;” in the poor-house he is, and in the poor-house he will remain, until that mean pauper hearse, driven by a pauper, and drawn by a horse that also looks like a pauper, “rattles his bones over the stones,” and carries him to the pit into which they cast the remains of these poor victims of indigence and sorrow. Or a man lives, not in the poor-house, but in a far worse place, in one of those “highly undesirable residences” which I described in my last lecture ; there he is, perhaps out of work, his wife and children half-starved, no food, no fire, not a bed to lie upon, not a friend to turn to ; and he “can't help it.” Perhaps these poor fellows who “can't help it” never could help it ; and, if so, I have no more to say than that I pity them, and would give

them some help if I could. But perhaps they might have helped it. Their condition may not be the result of circumstances over which they had no control. I make inquiry and I find that one of these men was once a well-to-do tradesman ; but he neglected his own business and got tampering with various speculations, tempted by the prospect of rapidly and easily becoming rich, and so he has lost his all. And I find that the other has, in his time, held more than one situation of trust and of profit ; but he chose to be careless, his employers could not depend upon his being at his post at the proper time, he took to drinking, his word could not be trusted, he did not faithfully account for the money for which he was responsible ; he was remonstrated with, he was warned, he was discharged and then taken on again ; but at last it was beyond all bearance, and, without money and without a character, he was turned adrift on the world ; and now he says, "I can't help it." True, my friend, but you know that you could have helped it.

But perhaps you will say—"It is of no use to cry over spilt milk ;" "the water that is past won't turn the mill wheel ;" "things that can't be helped, though they once might have been helped, are not worth talking about." I am not so sure of that. I grant you that such things may not be worth talking about to the men who have done them, and as a consequence got into such conditions. I don't want to imitate the man who, seeing a boy drowning, began to read him a lecture on his fool-hardiness in getting out of his depth when unable to swim. But if it be not worth while to talk to men about what they can't help, yet could have helped, —if so to talk is but to pour water on a drowned mouse,—still it is worth our while to speak of such things to others by way of warning. And most of you, I must suppose, have not gone so far with "I won't help it" that it has come to a hard, terrible, and unalterable "I can't

help it." For your sakes I have pointed out these cases. And let us all remember that, to whatever incapacity we may be reduced, our total responsibility is secured not by what at the last we "can't help," but by what from the first we could have helped.

I have spoken of things which men "can't help" now, but which one time they could have helped, could have avoided, escaped, prevented. I will now speak of some things which we can help if we will, though we are apt to say and to suppose that we can't. Now, even in regard to bodily infirmity, as it is not always true that we could not help it, so it is not always true that we cannot help it. It may have reached the "can't help it" stage, or it may not. You are ill, and weak, very liable to catch cold, very much subject to indigestion; your feeble and uncertain health very seriously interferes with your work, and diminishes your earnings; or it may be that it is not yourself, but some member of your family that is the sufferer; and you say you "can't help it." But perhaps you can. Have you tried? Have you tried what temperance in eating and in drinking will do? Have you tried what cleanliness will do? Have you tried what exercise will do? Have you tried what a resolute determination not to cave-in to a trifle will do? Have you tried what early and regular hours will do? If not, don't say you "can't help it" that you are ill, or that illness is a frequent inmate of your house. Don't sit down in despair; avoid as far as you can the obvious causes of ill health. There are thousands of people, moping and groaning over their ailments, and saying "I can't help it," who would not say so if they only knew the injurious tendency of too much drink, and the virtues of plenty of soap and water. And, speaking of bodily infirmities, I must take the opportunity of remarking that some who have had to contend with such

infirmities, in their severest forms, though unable to overcome them,—for to overcome them was impossible,—have, by their diligence, their perseverance, and their pluck, put to shame most people who have no infirmities to hinder and to hamper them. Their infirmities they could not help, but they could and they did help,—they could and they did overcome the obstacles which their infirmities placed in their way. When I think of Prescott, the American historian, writing his great works when he could hardly see; of John Metcalf, building bridges, and surveying and constructing roads, when he could not see at all; of Pascal, composing some of his noblest works when paralysis had shaken his delicate frame, and when he might be said to have one foot in the grave;—when I think of such men I feel that we ought to be ashamed if, making some comparatively trifling bodily infirmity an excuse for doing nothing, we sit down under it and say “I can’t help it.”

Take another case.—A man is very ignorant, he can scarcely write or read; perhaps he can neither write nor read at all. He is thus excluded from most sources of knowledge, and from many sources of the truest and purest enjoyment. He hardly knows how pitiable his condition is. Still, in various ways, it must be to some extent impressed upon the ignorant man that his ignorance is a defect, a hindrance, a bad thing for him; that, in consequence of it, he can hardly hope to get on in the world; that, as long as he is in such a dark condition of mind, he is utterly unfit for the higher employments of life. Well, such a man is too apt to say to himself—“It is too late to begin now; my parents neglected my education when I was young and never sent me to school; or, to confess the truth, though they did send me to school, I was an idler and a dunce; and so, ignorant I am, and ignorant I must remain,—“I can’t help it.” My friend, don’t say that; you can help it.

It is never too late to learn, though I must admit that it is far harder to learn late than early, so hard that, most probably, you will never learn much. Still, don't say you "can't help it." It is a question of will more than a question of power. You may make very decent progress if you will. However poor you are, there are schools, evening schools, where teachers will take you in hand for very little or for nothing,—satisfied, perfectly satisfied, with the reward which they have in their own hearts in knowing that they have tried to do some good by turning some rays of knowledge upon dark minds. "I can't help it" indeed! It won't do to say that as a justification of ignorance. Young men (let me especially address these remarks to you), there is no need for your continuing in ignorance if you be ignorant. Perhaps you have no genius, and you "can't help" that; perhaps you have no very great amount of brains, and you "can't help" that; perhaps you were very idle at school, and now you "can't help" that,—though I must remind you you could have helped it; perhaps you never had much chance at school, having been taken from it and set to work when most lads are just beginning to learn, and you "can't help" that; but, as to your continuing in ignorance, that is a thing which you can help, and which you must, if you mean to be anything or do anything in this world worthy of you as men. Don't lose any more time, for every day your "I won't help it" becomes more and more of a real "I can't help it;" every day the mind is left unemployed the rust increases upon it. Set to work with a will, and get out of that disgraceful and miserable state of mental darkness, and let us hear no more of "I can't help it," when all the treasures of knowledge are at your feet, waiting only to be picked up by the man who really prizes them and wishes to have a well-informed mind. If some poor fellows, who never had the chance of learning much in their youth and

at school, had thrown the blame upon their parents or upon their untoward circumstances, and said we "can't help it," we should never have had such a traveller as Dr. Livingstone; we should never have heard of William Cobbett; Hugh Miller would have remained a quarryman all his days, and never become a geologist; some one else might have invented the locomotive engine, but it never would have been invented by George Stephenson. If, after an early youth of neglected or extremely limited education, "I can't help it" had been, in every case, admitted as a justification of remaining in ignorance, I should think that fully one-half of the men who have distinguished themselves, and have instructed and benefited and charmed the world, would never have risen above the low level of the inglorious throng of hewers of wood and drawers of water; and the world would have been so much the less wise, the less prosperous, and the less happy.

A man is very poor; he has hardly a shirt to his back or a shoe to his foot; he is lean, hungry, weak, and ill by reason of want. It is many a day since he had as much as he could eat even of the coarsest fare. He has not lain on a bed these three years, excepting when he slept on something like one in the vagrant shed at the poor-house. Last night he sought shelter under a railway arch; the night before the police found him cowering in a half-built house and turned him out. He has often been brought before the magistrates as a vagabond, charged with the crime of having no visible means of subsistence. He comes to me and tells his tale of misery, and says, as the sum of it all, "I can't help it." Well, I cannot find in my heart to inquire too closely into the far past and learn whether he could have helped it. But I find that he is a fairly well-informed man. "Can you read?" "Yes." "Can you write?" "Yes." "Have you a trade?" "Yes, I am a

printer." By the way, I mean no disrespect to the printers, and if there be no such poor scare-crow and ragamuffin in all their ranks, I am very glad of it. But never mind what he is by trade or profession ; I am only supposing the case of a man who is not in the helpless condition of those who can do nothing, and are like an Irishman who once parried all my questions, and at last acknowledged that he had never done a hand's turn at anything since he was born. No, this poor fellow is master of some business or other, whether it be your business or mine. Yet he is in that wretched condition, and says that he "can't help it." Is it really that he can't or that he won't? I say to him never mind the past ; but, my good sir, tell me, Can you keep a civil tongue in your head? Can you, supposing you had a bed to lie on, rise from it, summer and winter, at half-past five and go to work? Can you pass, without entering it, the shop where, at that early hour, they sell hot coffee and some other things to working men? Can you keep a situation when you get one? Can you stick to your work all day, and make your service of some use to your employer? Can you be so economical as to save even sixpence a-week when your wages are four shillings a day? Can you spend half-a-crown wisely and well if you have it to spend? Can you manage to exist from noon on Saturday until midnight on Sunday without getting drunk? Can you, supposing you had money in your pockets, walk the length of a street without stepping into one of the gin-shops, whose lights flare at almost every corner? Can you say "No" when some one asks you to go and have a beer or a brandy and soda? Can you keep to your work when the races are on, or when some one is going to be hanged? Meditate upon some such questions as these, my good sir, and then consider whether you tell me the truth when, with regard to this wretchedness, you say "I can't help it." If you can do such things as are

i contained in that string of questions, then I say, concerning
 i your poverty, you can help it, and you ought to help it, and
 i you must help it. It is not of necessity that you are in that
 i condition. I don't ask how you got into it,—I leave that to be
 : settled between you and your conscience ; but there is a way
 out of it if there only be a will in that direction. Now try
 to get something to do. First of all give up the begging trade.
 I admit that it is not an unprofitable trade ; I daresay that,
 by going about pulling a long face, and whining out a parcel of
 lies, and imposing upon people whose heads are as soft as their
 hearts, you may get more money than, at the first, you can get
 by honest work. But there's positively no hope of you if you
 don't give up the begging trade ; depend upon it, that trade
 will end in the poor-house or in the gaol. Get something to
 do, however humble and however poorly remunerated. Go to
 the workshops for the unemployed poor. Don't consider yourself
 above that, too good for that,—that, sir, with a shilling a day
 for preparing fire-lighters,—that, I say, is respectable, that is
 honourable, that is gentlemanly, compared with the meanness
 and falseness and vagabondism of begging. “What !” you say,
 “I, a gentleman's son, a well-educated man ! I, who have lived
 in good society ! I, who have sat as principal clerk in a
 merchant's office ! I, who have had under me a score of men
 and boys to do as I directed them ! I go to work at such work
 as that, and for a shilling a day !” Yes sir, you had better do it
 or you may do worse ; so put your pride in your pocket and off
 with you. Be thankful that there is such a place and that there
 is such work ; yes, and that there is such pay, poor as it may seem
 to one who has been in a situation of £300 a year. Any-
 how, get something to do and do it ; do it with a will, do it
 with your might ; learn to rise betimes ; determine, out of that
 shilling a day, if you get no more, to put by twopence a week ;

resolve to know absolutely nothing of the public-house but the outside of it. If you find it hard to say "no," when asked to go in, practice all day upon that word "no" until you find it easy to say it under all circumstances ;—be civil ; be steady ; be as saving as you can. You are not a fool ; you are not an ignoramus ; your abilities and your knowledge, once you get upon a steady course, will be sure to carry you forward and upward. Keep up your heart ; never despair ; never be so mad as to think of drowning sorrow in drink, for sorrow so drowned always comes to life again, and has all the more life in it in consequence of such drowning. No ! drown it in work every day, drown it in sleep every night, drown it in hope both day and night. Commend your future humbly and confidently to God ; ask Him to give you health ; ask Him to open your path ; ask Him, above all, to strengthen and back up your good resolves. And so go on. You will never have to sleep under a railway arch again ; you will never be taken up as a vagabond again ; you will never have to beg your bread again. No ! but, perhaps, one of these days we shall see you a prosperous and a happy man ; possibly we shall even see you sitting on that very bench before which you stood yesterday morning charged with being a vagrant. So no more of this idle and cowardly and false "I can't help it." You can help it ; at all events you can try. Many a man, in circumstances and in character as utterly bankrupt and broken down as you, has "helped it" in some such manner as I have described. Why, if every man were to look on his poverty in sorrow and despair, crying "I can't help it," we should all be as poor as church mice. Drive away, my friend, at the difficulties that beset you ; fight them, master them, and show that you "can help it."

I spoke just now of men and women who have a very wretched life of it, because they have but indifferent wives and

husbands, and they say that they "can't help it;" well, in this case, as in that just considered, we shall not inquire into the past, nor ask—"could you have helped it?" Here these people are joined together in matrimony, and they must now make the best of it. "My wife has an awful temper," whispers this husband, for he is afraid she will hear what he says; "she has an awful temper, and can't she scold? you should just see her in one of her tantrums when her spirit is up, and when there has been just the least thing in the world to provoke her; she has often flung a stool at my head; and one Sunday evening, at tea time, she threw the kettle full of boiling water at me. The fact is there's no living with her, I don't know what to do; I am driven to the public house;"—"I can't help it." Well, my friend, it is a sad thing to have a tigress like that in the house, but when you say that you "can't help it," are you sure of that? She had not such a temper as that when you married her, had she? You got on very comfortably for a time, didn't you? But didn't you take to being out late at night? Didn't you often leave her society for that of the companions you met in the public house? Tell me, what proportion of your wages have you been in the habit of letting her have to keep the house upon? Did you never go home on a Saturday night or early on Sunday morning without a single shilling? Have you never done anything to sour her temper? Have you always been kind and considerate? Have you tried to please her, and so respectably conducted yourself as to give her reason to be proud of her husband? It is the wife's turn to speak now, and what says she?"—"My husband is no better than a brute. He is always grumbling and growling and snarling; if his dinner is not ready just when he comes in, or if it is not to his liking, he flies into a passion, and calls me all the vile names he can lay his tongue to.

He has been unmanly enough to strike me more than once. I hardly ever see him in the evenings ; he leaves me to do as I can with the children, and to slave away at my needle, while he goes to enjoy himself at the public-house. There never was a woman worse treated. I don't deserve it ; it's too bad ; I have done my best, but it's of no use ; I am very miserable, but "I can't help it." Now, my good woman, don't cry ;—but just think whether you really have done your best to make your husband a good husband ; whether, for instance, in that matter of his dinner or his supper, you have done your very best to please him, and whether, if he has sometimes been a bit cross, you have not paid him back in his own coin by being cross too. If husband and wife both take the sulks and don't speak to each other for a week, only snarl at each other like cat and dog, it is all nonsense for them to say they "can't help it."

And so indeed with many other miseries, both at home and abroad ; things of which we say that we "can't help" them. The fact is, we may help them if we will. And where, by reason of our moral weakness, it may be only too true that, of ourselves, we "can't help" doing things that are wrong, let us remember that we need not be left altogether to ourselves. I, at all events, believe most firmly in this—*that Almighty God is ever willing, as He is ever able, by His providence around us and by His grace within us, to help us in every good purpose and every good work, in every struggle with temptation and passion, in every conflict with difficulty and with sorrow ; so that, even when it is true that "I can't help it," I won't despair. I know of One who can ; and I will ask Him to do that for me which is more than I can do for myself.*

‘I DON’T CARE.’

“I don’t care” may mean something very wise or something very foolish, something very good or something very bad, something very noble or something very base. The best men in the world, in common with the worst, have often said “I don’t care,” and have acted accordingly; and I am not sure but that “I don’t care” has done quite as much good as harm. So let us not hastily condemn it as a saying, or a maxim, or an expression of a state of mind to be at all times carefully avoided; let us rather study to know when it is well and when it is not well to say “I don’t care;” and I believe it will turn out, upon inquiry, that, if we mean and wish to be and to do what we ought to be and to do, “I don’t care” will, quite as often as “I do care,” have to be our motto.

In this lecture, then, I am going to say a word for “I don’t care.” I am going to teach you to say “I don’t care;” I am going to point out the duty of saying “I don’t care,”—the courage, the dignity, the nobleness of saying “I don’t care.” Yet you need not be afraid of my encouraging the recklessness, the rashness, and the many other bad things that often lurk under the saying “I don’t care.” The object of this address is twofold—it is to point out when to say and when not to say “I don’t care.”

Let us take the good side of this saying first. It is well for us, it is well for all the world, that some men, that a great many men have said, with reference to some things, “I don’t care.”

"I don't care" has had a great deal to do with giving us our soldiers and our sailors; and although it would have been a great deal better for the world if it had always lived in peace, so as to require no man to be a soldier, we should be very badly off without sailors. But "I don't care" is the principle upon which most lads go to sea. "I don't care" for the difficulties and the dangers of a sea-faring life. There is equinoctial heat and there is arctic cold; there are tedious calms and furious storms; there are sickly climates in which an Englishman can hardly live; and, sometimes, on board ship, the provisions run short and become bad, and the poor fellows are almost starved; and all the comforts of home have to be surrendered, and most of the pleasures of a landsman's life have to be given up all the time the sailor is at sea. Is it not well, then, that some fellows are so constituted that they "don't care" for these things? If we all cared for them, cared for them so much as to shun the seaman's life, the commerce of the world would be brought to a stand-still. "I don't care" is the motto and must be the motto of all great travellers and explorers. "I don't care" for difficulty, "I don't care" for fatigue, "I don't care" for exposure to the extremes of heat and cold, "I don't care" for danger in any shape, and "I don't care" for death. Only think what a large place "I don't care" must have in the mind of a man like Dr. Livingstone. In fact, ever since those bold Phoenicians and Carthaginians of ancient times ventured to pass the Straits of Gibraltar and to sail into the Atlantic Ocean, "I don't care" has had a great deal to do with those geographical discoveries that have made known to us so much concerning the face of the globe, and the people and other creatures that dwell upon it. Moreover, "I don't care" mans the life-boat, and sends her out in the raging storm to save the lives of shipwrecked men; and "I don't

"care" animates the fire brigade, as its members risk their lives to rescue others from the devouring flames; and "I don't care" sends scores of brave fellows down into the suffocating coal-pit, to search for and to recover, whether living or dead, their poor comrades whom an explosion has overtaken; and, if it were not for "I don't care," we should find it rather hard to obtain men to drive the Irish Express and the Limited Mail, on dark and foggy nights, at the rate of forty miles an hour. So let us not condemn "I don't care" in an unqualified manner; let us honour it, admire it, be thankful for it, in so far as it is the expression of that courage, of that readiness to forego much comfort, of that indifference to danger, which are such grand and precious properties of the human mind, and to which we all owe so much.

"I don't care" is also a very good principle as seen in the behaviour and felt in the experience of the man who is easily pleased and more easily satisfied, whose tastes are simple, who makes his wants as few as possible, who can do with water if he can't have wine, who can put up with cold meat when he can't have hot, and with very humble fare when his means won't allow him better. Some people invent for themselves so many wants as to make themselves very miserable whenever those wants cannot be supplied. Such creatures are not fit to "rough it" in the world. Tender, finicky, namby-pamby, "Miss Nancy" sort of fellows, who are wretched unless supplied with every comfort and almost every luxury that can be obtained. Well now, I think that the "I don't care" which expresses a power and a readiness to "rough it," if "roughing it" be necessary, is a great deal better, a great deal more manly, than that extreme particularity in regard to all manner of little things. At all events, it is a great matter for a man to have a stomach that says "I don't care" though the food you put into

me be very coarse, and not cooked exactly to a turn ; and a great matter for a man to have a chest that says "I don't care" what the weather is or which way the wind blows, and if I can't get country air, I can manage to get on very well with such as I find in town. Of course a man may be so constituted that he must care about such things ; so constituted that "I don't care," applied to such things, would be illness and death ; but it is possible also for a man, by over carefulness, to bring himself to this condition of inability to endure anything that involves hardship. "I don't care," in so far as it is the sign of a robust constitution and of a manly independence of those artificial wants which men, too intent upon enjoyment, manufacture to their great discomfort,—in so far, I say, "I don't care" is wise and good, and indicates a state of mind which it would be well for us all to cultivate.

So far for the virtue and the value of "I don't care" in regard to things physical. Now I shall try to show you of what use it is in some other and more important matters. It is well to be able to say "I don't care" in regard to what other people may think and talk concerning you. I do not say that it is well to be altogether indifferent to the opinions that our neighbours may form of us. I do not say that it is well to set Society, or so much of Society as knows anything about us, at defiance. There may be a great deal of conceit, and of contemptible conceit, in those eccentricities of dress and of behaviour which make a man singular, and cause people to talk about him. It is not "I don't care," but "I do care" that is at the root of that singularity. Nevertheless, we are, most of us, far too much the slaves of what may be thought and said about us. And it is a very costly slavery. It costs some people a great deal in dress, in furniture, in the entertainments they provide for their friends. They cannot bear to think of the

remarks that may be made upon them ; how one will comment upon the shabbiness of a coat or of a gown ; how another will ask, Did you notice that hat, and did you see those boots ? How another will say—"I should think poor Mr. Smith and his wife are not getting on very well in the world, for there is rather a hard-up look about them and their family. They used to keep two servants, I hear they have only one now, and that she gets only £4 a year, and that Mrs. Smith has to do a great deal of the work of the house." "Yes," says another gossip, "and if you will believe me, and not tell any one, I know it for a fact, because I had it from my servant, and she had it from theirs, that they very often go for most of a week without any butcher's meat." Now I hold that "I don't care" is a grand defence against the annoyance that all this tittle-tattle causes, and against the expense to which some people would go to prevent it. An old proverb says, "he that would stop everybody's mouth must have plenty of meal ;" the best plan is, whether you have plenty of meal or not, never to attempt to stop people's mouths, but to let them talk and twaddle as they like, and to say "I don't care." But suppose they tell lies about us, and try to take away our characters, how then ? Well, even then, perhaps, your best friend is "I don't care." I have myself often derived great comfort from the thought that "a fool's tongue is long enough to cut his throat," and from the assurance that "a lie has no legs." And rely upon this, that, if you go on leading a sober, industrious, truthful, and quiet life, holding your tongue and refraining from rushing into print or into letter-writing, you will soon live down all the spite and all the lies of the people who try to talk or to write you down. Be silent and you are invulnerable.

Another, and a very important case, in which "I don't care" is of great service, is this,—your judgment and your con-

science point out to you a certain path as the path of your duty. But you see, plainly enough, that if you enter upon that path you will meet with trouble, you will be laughed at and called a fool or a fanatic, you will be hated, you will be despised, you will give great offence, those who were your friends will become your enemies. Or it may be that this course, which your judgment and your conscience tell you is right, is a course pursuing which you will have to endure serious loss ; you might get on better in the world if you did as the world does, whereas you feel it to be right in many things to do otherwise. For example—it may be that if, being a tradesman, you vote according to your conscience, you will lose profitable customers ; or if, being a working man, you vote according to your conscience, you will be turned off ; and, if these lectures were delivered to tenant farmers, I might say—it is very likely indeed that, should you vote as you believe you ought, you will have notice to quit your farm. Or it may be that, acting faithfully upon your religious convictions, you leave one denomination and join another, or forsake a godless life and become a decided, earnest Christian, there are people who will never forgive you. In many cases the struggle between conscience and worldly interest is very severe. Well, that's the time for "I don't care" to come forward on the behalf of conscience, so that the man, tempted to put his conscience into his pocket, shall say,—“No, ‘I don't care’ what may be the loss, the discomfort, the difficulty, the opposition, the hatred I shall have to encounter ; I must do the thing that I believe to be right, come what will !” I could speak of many noble cases of this sort, in which men have had the moral courage to say—“I don't care.” It is “I don't care” that has led patriots to fight against injustice and oppression, and to shed their blood in the sacred cause of freedom. It is “I don't care” that has ani-

mated sufferers for conscience sake, and formed the "noble army of martyrs." Rather more than two hundred years ago, two thousand ministers of religion in this country gave up their comfortable livings, and submitted to great want and great persecution, rather than defile their consciences by doing what they felt to be wrong. "I don't care" for want, "I don't care" for persecution; that was the foundation of English non-conformity. Yes! and that, too, was the foundation of English Protestantism, and of Protestantism everywhere. The Council of Constance condemned John Huss to the flames. He was degraded from his sacerdotal rank. For this purpose he was dressed in the robes of a priest, the different parts of which were then taken off him, with set forms of expression. When this was over and the tonsure had been obliterated, a cap, printed with figures of demons, was placed on his head, and the bishops said—"Now we devote thy soul to the infernal devils." "But I," exclaimed Huss, raising his eyes to Heaven, "commend my soul, redeemed by Thee, into Thy hands, O Lord Jesus Christ!" That was the martyr's "I don't care," felt and expressed in the immediate prospect of being burned to death. St. Paul was once on a journey to Jerusalem, and it was revealed to him that, if he did go thither, bonds and afflictions abided him; and he was by no means sure that he would escape a violent and cruel death. "But," said he, "none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy." His friends tried to turn him from his purpose; with much entreaty and with many tears they besought him not to proceed on that journey; but he replied—"What mean ye to weep, and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." It was "I don't care" that made Paul first a missionary and then a martyr. A decree was issued in Babylon

to the effect that if, for a period of thirty days, any man should ask a petition of any god or man, save of the king of Babylon, he should be cast into the den of lions. There was a young man there named Daniel, and when he "knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and, his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime." That was Daniel's "I don't care." And there were three other young men in Babylon who, like all the rest of the people, were required to bow down and worship a golden image which Nebuchadnezzar had set up. They would not do so. Nebuchadnezzar had them brought before him; he was in a terrible rage; he however forgave them their past disobedience, but told them that if they again refused to worship his golden image they should "be cast, the same hour, into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who," exclaimed the furious monarch, "is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" What was their reply? "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter." What these young men said to Nebuchadnezzar was—"We don't care either for thee or for the burning fiery furnace." The late Mr. Robertson, of Brighton, was once visited by a lady who thought that he preached false and dangerous doctrines, and who warned him of the consequences which would follow on the course of action he was pursuing. His reply was "I don't care." She thought she had caught him, and, having no doubt in her mind the old saying 'don't care was hanged,' asked him—"Do you know what don't care came to?" "Yes, madam," said Mr. Robertson, "He was crucified on Calvary." And so He was. If ever there were one who opposed a strong, stern, unconquerable "I don't care" to the temptation to shirk duty, to shrink from speaking the truth, and to avoid the danger

which duty and truth brought with them, that One was Jesus Christ. Much, very much of what He said and of what He did was calculated to offend, and did offend, the most influential and most powerful of the people; but He knew that it was right to be faithful to the truth, whatever might be the consequences; and He saw, plainly enough, what the consequences would be. He saw the gathering of the storm; He might have avoided it, He might have dispersed it; at His word "peace! be still," the angry passions of Pharisees and priests would have subsided and calmed down like the waves on the lake of Galilee; but He "did not care" for the scourge, for the crown of thorns, for the cross,—He endured the cross, despising the shame. There was His "I don't care," I don't care for myself,—that was its meaning; and we owe our Salvation to that "I don't care" which brought Jesus to the cross.

Let us observe, however, that this "I don't care" which enables a man, for the sake of God, of duty, and of conscience, to face hostility, danger, and suffering, is not sheer and absolute carelessness. It is a carelessness which springs from and is justified by a very great carefulness; it is a carelessness for lesser things that arises from a carefulness about greater things. Paul did not care for hunger and thirst, for cold and nakedness, for shipwreck and imprisonment, for bonds and affliction;—but why? Because he *did* care for the honour of the Master whom he served; because he *did* care for the Gospel that he preached; because he *did* care for the salvation of sinners; and because he *did* care to have a conscience void of offence towards God and man. And our Holy and Divine Redeemer did not care for the hatred of the Scribes and the Pharisees, for the malice of the priests, for the hostility of the Jewish council, for the scorn of Herod, for the power of Pontius Pilate, for the crown of thorns, for the savage cry "Away with Him, away with

Him, crucify Him, crucify Him," nor for the cross with all its anguish ;—but why ? Because He *did* care for the will of His Heavenly Father, in accordance to which will He suffered ; because He *did* care for that Truth to which His life and His death bore witness ; and because He *did* care for the salvation of the world, whose sins He came to bear "in His own body on the tree." And so it was His carefulness for us that made Him so careless with regard to Himself.

Well, I have shown you some little of the good side of "I don't care." I have tried to point out how brave and noble it often is, and how much we are indebted to it for very great things,—for our freedom, for our religion, yes, and even for eternal salvation, which, viewed in one light, is the result of Christ's courageous, self-denying, self-sacrificing "I don't care." Now I have to look at "I don't care" in another point of view ; in the point of view in which it is, I suppose, most commonly looked at,—as a very unwise saying, and expressive of a rash and reckless indifference to the consequences of what we may say or do.

"I don't care," then, is very unwise and very bad when it keeps a man in ignorance. "I don't care" to learn, I don't like the trouble of it, the self-denial and the effort that it requires ; I would rather spend my leisure time in idleness or in amusement. And so "I don't care" leads to this, that a man lives in deplorable and disgraceful darkness of mind, which unfits him for most of the higher classes of occupation, renders progress impossible, and, extending from the mind to the heart, makes it very probable that he will sooner or later become a criminal. For our Head-Constable's report shows that ninety-seven out of every hundred offenders against the law are persons of very defective education. Perhaps it is still worse when "I don't care" takes this form,—"I don't

care" that my children live in ignorance; I won't be at the trouble and expense of sending them to school. Why, the shilling a week, that would be required to pay for those four children's schooling, provides for me two quarts of beer on a Saturday night! Do you think I'm going to give up the only comfort I have that they may go to school?—Well, I hope the time is not far off when fellows of this sort will be made to care about this duty; when the law will give them to understand that they shall no longer be allowed to rear thieves and murderers, and to destroy their children by neglecting their education.

"I don't care" is very unwise and very bad when a youth makes it his motto in regard to the business he is sent to learn. He may not wilfully make it his motto; he may not, of set purpose, refuse to perfect himself in his trade; but there may be such indifference, such neglect, such carelessness, as shows that "I don't care" is, practically, his maxim; and the consequence is that we have many men who, in their various trades and businesses, are hardly worth their salt. I would say—Be as careful as ever you can to make yourself "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed;" whatever the work is, do try to be a first-rate hand; obtain knowledge; seek by very careful practice to become skilful. You will find it to your very great advantage in the time to come; for, as an old proverb says—"a stone that is fit for the wall won't be left in the way." Most of the stones that are "left in the way" are "unfit for the wall;" they are so much rubbish, and it is generally "I don't care" that has made them such.

"I don't care" is very unwise and very bad when it means "I don't care" about being economical and laying up for a rainy day. It means this my friend—That you don't care about being in debt; that you don't care about going at last, and it

may be before long, to the poor-house ; that you don't care what those dependent upon you suffer ; that you don't care how things may go with you in the future, provided you enjoy yourself in your own fashion to-day. Now, I know that we have a Divine counsel to "take no thought for the morrow," which, however, means "don't be anxious about the morrow." But it is one thing not to be anxious about the morrow,—it is another thing to make no sort of provision for the morrow. Indeed, one way to avoid being anxious for the morrow is to make the best provision for it we can. Let us not forget that He who tells us not to be anxious for the morrow, when He had fed a multitude of people with food miraculously created, and was able to do the same thing as often as He chose, commanded his disciples to gather up the fragments that remained, so that nothing should be lost. I would honour the man who, having unbounded confidence in his Heavenly Father, should go to the verge or even beyond the verge of prudence in parting with his money, if he parted with it in works of charity,—in feeding his poor and hungry neighbours, or otherwise helping those who are in difficulty and in want ; for "He that hath pity on the poor lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given will He pay him again." Yes ! my friends, the godly man, whose heart overflows with charity, has a sort of warrant from God to do many a thing in the shape of beneficence which the world would call imprudent. But I do not find that your spendthrifts part with their money upon the principles of Christian beneficence ; what they spend they spend upon themselves and upon their boon companions. It is one thing if, when a man has very little to spare, and sees a poor neighbour and his family in extreme distress, he shares his only shilling with them to get them a morsel of bread, saying to himself—well, "I don't care," the Lord will provide for me ; but, at all events, I can't stand this sight of

hunger and wretchedness;—it is another thing when a man looks at the public-house, and enters it, saying—"I don't care," I must have a jolly good spree, come what will. It is the provident man that can afford to be the generous man. It is he who helps himself that is able to help his poor and distressed neighbour; and, if I advocate and urge thrift and economy, I do so not on merely selfish grounds, but in order that you may have the great happiness of doing good. I should be very sorry if the tendency of these lectures were to make men greedy, grasping, close-fisted skin-flints; I would rather see men utterly careless about money than so careful about it as to become its slaves and its worshippers. God preserve us all from "covetousness, which is idolatry." Still, "wilful waste makes woeful want," and therefore I say, what I am sure you all feel to be true, that "I don't care" is unwise and bad when it means total indifference as to any provision for the future.

Once more "I don't care" is most unwise and most injurious when it means "I don't care" about God and His word and His will. This is perhaps the most common form that "I don't care" takes, and all its other bad forms generally branch off from this. "I don't care," when this is its meaning, discovers a very shameful ingratitude. It amounts to saying, "I don't care" for all the goodness and kindness and mercy that my Creator has bestowed upon me," and "I don't care" for all the love which Jesus Christ bore towards me, when he died for me upon the cross! You "don't care" for God, and God has so cared for you! You "don't care" for that Saviour who has so cared for you! My friend, tell me plainly that you are an infidel, and then, though I shall be sorry for your infidelity, I shall be able to think of you as not incapable of gratitude,—I shall be able to believe that you have a heart; but, if you do believe in God, if you do acknowledge that God,

in the person of Jesus Christ, came to this world to redeem and to bless you, what is your "I don't care" but the most heartless ingratitude of which human nature is capable? And this "I don't care" is not only ungrateful, it is unwise; it is unwise in regard to this world as well as in regard to the world to come. You "don't care" to render that obedience to God's will which alone can make you truly happy, which alone can save you from those temptations and those sins which are the plentiful source of misery in all its forms; and you "don't care" to be saved from the wrath to come. And there is heaven, with all its glory and felicity, there is eternal life in the presence of God, there is "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away,"—and you "don't care!" I leave these thoughts with you, my friend; I hope that you will reflect upon them. I pray that you may change your mind, and that, whatever you "don't care" for, you will care for God, His word, His will, His salvation.

Now, I have endeavoured to point out the good and the evil that are in this saying "I don't care," and to show when and with regard to what it is wise and right, and when and with regard to what it is unwise and wrong to say it. If either of these lessons be worth learning—let us learn it.

"I CAN'T SEE IT."

Many things may cause a man to say "I can't see it." This saying may be the expression of shrewd sense, in which case it is to be commended ; it may be the expression of honest doubt, in which case it is to be respected ; it may be the expression of religious faith, in which case it is to be admired ; it may be the expression of profound ignorance, in which case it is to be pitied. But it may also be the expression of pride, of prejudice, or of passion, in which cases it is to be reasoned with, reprov'd, and condemned.

I shall endeavour to give a few instances of "I can't see it" as the saying is prompted by these various states of mind, and so to distinguish between the wise and the unwise use, or between the use and the abuse of "I can't see it."

"I can't see it," then, may be the expression of shrewd sense, of that very necessary worldly wisdom which enables a man to understand what is good for himself and his interests. For example:—You are an industrious thrifty man, and you have saved a little money. Some one hears of this, and comes to you to invite you to join in some speculation that he is getting up. He tries to show that it is certain to pay, and to pay well ; that failure is impossible ; that you will probably, in a short time, double and more than double the money which you put into the concern. Your friend who makes this tempting offer has a large connection ; it is true he has no money of his own, but if you will find the money he will find

the brains. It will be a very happy thing for you if, in this case, "you can't see it." How many people who have been brought down in the world, and are struggling on the borders of beggary, would have been comfortably off to-day and for the rest of their lives if, to all the promises of thirty, fifty, and eighty per cent. to be made by Limited Companies, they had said,—we "can't see it;" we "can't see" how that profit is to be made; we "can't see" that our money will be safe; we "can't see" that the apparently aristocratic names at the head of the concern are any guarantee against loss; we "can't see" anything but the probability that the whole scheme is a swindle, or, at all events, a speculation calculated to benefit none but its promoters; we "can't see" any future for it but bankruptcy and ruin. Or take a case of this sort:—Some needy neighbour, who is always needy, wants to borrow a few pounds; he is sure of being able to return the money in a very short time, for a far larger sum is due, or soon will be due to himself; he only wants a little accommodation; he will pay you good interest in the meantime. Now, if, in such a case, you "can't see it," you had better tell your neighbour so. Or if such-a-one asks you to become a security for him in regard to a loan, and tells you that it is really only a matter of form, that you are certain never to be called upon to make it good,—take care. Great numbers of men, who have just contrived to save a little, have had their all swept away by yielding, kindly it may be, but incautiously and unwisely, to such requests. If you "can't see" one of these two things, viz., the certainty of not having to pay or the certainty of your being able to stand the loss, you had better have nothing to do with such a transaction. This, too, is a common case:—A man calls upon you begging; he is in great distress; he has had to pawn almost everything he possessed; he has been out of work fourteen weeks; he

wants to go to his friends in Manchester, Birmingham, or London ; he has contrived to scrape together as much as will pay his fare, all but half-a-crown,—won't you help him ? Now the best answer in most of these cases is "I can't see it." And it is a true answer ; for you "can't see" that what this beggar tells you is the truth ; you "can't see" that he will go to his distant friends ; you "can't see" that he won't go to the first gin-shop round the corner and spend what you might give him in getting drunk ; you "can't see" that your bounty may not be an encouragement to idleness and lying and intemperance. We ought to be able to see a good many things before we give as much as a copper to a beggar ; and, in most cases, if we did see all that we ought to see, that is, if we knew the whole matter, we certainly should not be able to see the wisdom of parting with our money. Again, if your acquaintances, companions, shop-mates would entice you to go with them to the public-house, the free-and-easy, the singing saloon, assuring you that you will have *such* a jolly evening ; it will be well for you if you "can't see it ;" if, seeing that such an evening will be expensive, that it will be a waste of time, that you might spend it more sensibly and more profitably and more pleasureable in other ways ; that to go where your friends want you to go will probably be to expose yourself to temptation ; that the result of your going may be that you will get muddled in your head and corrupted in your heart,—it will be well if, seeing these things, you "can't see" that it is a good thing for you to yield to such enticement. Such are some of the cases in which shrewd sense will teach a man to say "I can't see it," and in which "I can't see it" will be a great safeguard against much mischief, much deception, much misery.

"I can't see it" may be the expression of honest doubt. I now have in view, more especially, honest doubt in regard to

matters that concern religion. You are a sceptic, and some Christian man would fain make you a believer. He lays before you his argument for the truth of religion, for the credibility of the Gospel; but you "can't see it." You are sure, my friend, you "*can't see it?*" It is not that you *won't*? Honestly, seriously, you cannot believe in Christianity upon the evidence or by virtue of the reasons that are brought forward. Then, for my part, I would say your "can't see it" is to be respected. I am afraid that neither sceptics nor believers have, in all instances, respected each other's state of mind as they ought. The sceptic has often pronounced the believer a superstitious fool; and if that believer be a minister of religion, scepticism probably declares that he is a knave, who deliberately imposes his ridiculous trash upon credulous people to make a living out of them. On the other hand, the believer too often speaks of the sceptic as a monster of impiety,—as a man destitute of all moral principle. Now we are not likely to do one another any good if we think and speak in such ways as these. So likewise when it is not a question of infidelity and belief, but a question of Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, or of Church and Dissent, or of High Churchism and Low Churchism, or of one form of Dissent and another. A doctrine may be so clear to one man that he can hardly believe another who says "I can't see it;" he thinks that it must be that this man *won't* see it. Now it is not always so. Religious doctrines, like many doctrines in philosophy, are not all as plainly seen as a mountain or a haystack. We must make allowances for honest doubt. The man who, perhaps of all others, saw religious truths most clearly, says,—“Now we see through a glass darkly.” In proportion to the importance which we attribute to what we do see and others "can't see," let us, by all likely means, try to let them see it, try to show it them; but as the

old method of persecution never succeeded,—as a man was not likely to be converted to a religion that fined him, imprisoned him, and condemned him to death for disbelieving it, so the method still too often resorted to, the method of abuse, is just as certain to fail of producing any good impression. In dealing with any man who differs from us, and whom we think in great error and in great danger, it is useful, first of all, to admit and to respect the honesty of his avowal when, in reference to our belief, he says—"I can't see it."

Again, "I can't see it" may be the expression of religious faith. "I can't see it," yet I believe it,—that is what every religious man has to say with regard to many things; "for we walk by faith, not by sight." Our Saviour himself says—"Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." And let no man think that this believing in what we "can't see" is a mark of credulity. What a Christian man believes, though he "can't see it," he believes upon testimony, the trustworthiness of which commends itself to his understanding. We have indeed, all of us, to "walk by faith, not by sight," every day in things secular as much as in things religious. We have to accept and to rely upon testimony. "Seeing is believing;" but the man who measures his believing by his seeing will believe very little, will believe far too little to enable him to live with any comfort. The man who, before he will do a day's work, insists upon seeing the wages that are to be paid him, or a formal security for the payment of them, is a man who will be very often out of work. We all believe what we don't see, and see what we don't believe. We believe what we don't see, because we believe in the past or present existence of millions of people and millions of events which those eyes of ours never beheld. And we see what we don't believe; because we see the sun rising in the east and travelling to the

west, and yet we believe that he does nothing of the kind, for we believe that it is we ourselves who are carried from the west to the east, the sun being stationary. There are some who, in regard to the apparent movements of the heavenly bodies, believe contrary to the evidence of their eyesight, because they have studied and mastered the science of astronomy; because the eye of the mind, seeing all the chain of reasoning by which the conclusions of that science are established, corrects the bodily eye, and discovers that the acceptance of its testimony would be an illusion. But of those who, contrary to the testimony of their eyesight, believe that the earth moves, and that, relatively to the earth, the sun is stationary, not one in ten thousand, not one in a hundred thousand, has so mastered the science of astronomy that his belief is a matter of clear, intellectual vision. No, nearly all of us believe, just upon the testimony of others, a thing so plainly contrary to what we see as this relationship of the sun to the earth. You say that you will believe what you see, and only what you see. Then, Sir, you will believe that the sun, moon, and stars all march round this globe every twenty-four hours; you will believe a great many things that are false and ridiculous, if you insist upon believing all that you see and only what you see. Thus, even in regard to natural facts, we have to rest upon other testimony than that of our senses; we must believe where we "can't see." And so in regard to business life; commerce must cease if no man can credit the word and the honour of his fellow-man. Such credit may be carried to an extent that is foolish and unsafe, still it must exist, and exist largely. And why should religion be an exception to so general a rule? "I can't see" God, filling all space with his presence, and upholding all things with his power; "I can't see" Jesus Christ, working miracles, teaching righteousness, dying on the cross to

take away the sins of the world ; " I can't see " Heaven, with its glories and its joys ; but what " I can't see " I can and do believe, and that on testimony which, the more I consider and examine it, shows itself the more worthy of my credit. I believe it, though " I can't see it,"—this, my friends, is the expression of religious faith ; and to the faith that believes where it " can't see," we owe no small proportion of the noblest deeds that men have ever done. To the faith that believes where it " can't see," we owe almost every martyrdom that has been offered for truth and for liberty, and almost every effort that has been made for the welfare of mankind. It is the faith that believes where it " can't see " that leads us on in the paths of religious duty ; it is the faith that believes where it " can't see," on which alone you and I will have to depend for comfort and for hope in a dying hour.

But sometimes " I can't see it " is the expression of profound ignorance. And, taking it in this view, there is of course many a thing of which every one of us must say, or at least ought to say, " I can't see it." And it is a great deal better to say this at once, in all frankness, than to fancy or to pretend that we do see what we don't. There are some people who " can't see " nothing ; that is—who can see everything. Such men are apt to make great fools of themselves when they discover their ignorance in this pretended knowledge, when they talk of things they don't understand in the presence of a person well-informed upon such matters. No man is expected to know everything ; it is pretty well if a man is thoroughly acquainted with one or two things,—especially with the things that most concern him ; and there is nothing discreditable in the confession " I can't see it," when what you " can't see " is something you are hardly supposed to see. When " I can't see it " is the honest and humble confession of the smallness of our know-

ledge and of the limited extent of our thinking faculties, it is to be honoured rather than despised. Still, as the expression of ignorance, "I can't see it" is often to be pitied, and perhaps often to be blamed. To be pitied ; for when "I can't see it" means "I can't see" that six times seven are forty-two, or "I can't see" how to spell correctly, or "I can't see" how to write a letter without making half-a-dozen mistakes, or "I can't see" that it matters much whether I am educated or uneducated,—that is a case in which "I can't see" is to be pitied. And in such a case, perhaps, it is also to be blamed. How is it that you "can't see" these things? How is it that you have grown up to the stature and the strength of a man with the ignorance of a little child? What have you been doing with your brains all these years? Were you ever at school? did you learn anything when you were there? have you forgotton what you learned? My good friend, this "I can't see it," which means ignorance of the merest rudiments of education, is a most terrible blindness. Most deplorable of all is it when the "I can't see it" that means ignorance, means ignorance of the distinction and the difference between right and wrong. You may say that a man's conscience will always tell him what he ought and what he ought not to do. Perhaps your conscience tells you this, perhaps my conscience tells this to me ; and so much the more guilty are we if, against the voice of conscience, we do wrong. But conscience is one thing in the man who has been, to some fair extent, taught and trained in moral duty ; it is another thing in him who has had no such advantage. What can you expect from conscience in the case of a youth who, all his life, has been surrounded by dissolute and vicious people, and whose parents have set him an example of every kind of wrong-doing? You surely don't look for a very tender conscience or a very enlightened conscience in such a one as that. No ! if there be a conscience at all it is a

"conscience seared with a hot iron," it is a conscience all but utterly darkened; it has scarcely any sense of good and evil, scarcely any idea of duty. Except wilful murder, and almost everything else that is bad is, to such a conscience, a matter of perfect indifference. A person with such a conscience will steal, and see nothing wrong in stealing. For the sake of some paltry advantage, or in order to get out of a scrape, or in mere wantonness, he will tell lies by the score and by the hundred, with no idea that there is anything sinful in lying. And how many people there are who, though their conscience would protest against stealing and lying, get drunk, and think there is no sin in that. Thus, as an expression of moral ignorance, "I can't see it" covers a very wide field and includes a large portion of mankind. Hence the importance of moral and religious as well as of intellectual training,—the importance of educating the heart as carefully as the head; that men may see, clearly and sharply, the boundaries that divide right from wrong and duty from sin. For although, even with the advantage of this knowledge, men, overcome by their passions, may go astray, still a conscience that can see the path of duty is the first requisite to a man's walking in the path of duty.

"I can't see it" may also be the expression of pride. It is so in the case of the man who thinks of himself more highly than he ought, who has a great opinion of his knowledge, of his abilities, of his character. The fact is that he may be very ignorant, but he "can't see it;" very weak-minded, but he "can't see it;" very far from estimable in character, but he "can't see it." And he "can't see" why he should not be thought more of than he is; he "can't see" why he should not be better paid than he is; he "can't see" why *such* a man, who is greatly his inferior, should be in a better position. His pride and self-conceit have blinded

him. His misfortune is that he "can't see" himself as others see him. If he could and if he did, what a change would take place in his opinions, what a change also in his behaviour! How ridiculous and contemptible he would appear to himself; how small he would seem in his own eyes! A faithful looking-glass for the mind is an invaluable thing, and we have it in God's Word. I believe that one reason why many people so dislike the Bible is that it shows them so plainly and so truly what they are; that it discovers their ignorance, their conceit, their insincerity, their impurity, their general good-for-nothingness. For it is such "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" that no man can study it without being either humbled or offended. It not only reproves our wrong doing; it tells us that "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags," and this the proud man "can't see;" but it is true nevertheless.

"I can't see it" often expresses prejudice. When one man, on whatever ground, contracts a prejudice against another, he "can't see" anything good in him. Whatever worthy action the object of their prejudice performs, he is believed to perform it under the influence of some unworthy motive; his benevolence is nothing but ostentation, or an ambition to be thought well of; some self-interested design is at the bottom of deeds, to all appearance, perfectly disinterested. There were men so bitterly prejudiced against our Saviour that they invented this explanation of His miracles,—“He casteth out devils through the prince of devils.” Envy is a great fosterer of prejudice. There are people who cannot forgive failure; there are people who cannot forgive success. If a man contrives to get on better than themselves they hate him; they "can't see" any merit in him. If he be a preacher, his less successful brother preachers "can't see" why people should be attracted by such an empty-headed talker as that; if he be a merchant or a

tradesman, his less successful fellow-merchants or fellow-tradesmen "can't see" what there is in him that he should carry all before him; and, because they "can't see" his cleverness, his industry, and other good business properties, they hint that there must be a good deal of knavery in his transactions, or that he is insolvent, and that he will one day come to grief; and they don't stick at circulating reports injurious to his mercantile credit. Curiously enough, these prejudiced people often cast up to a man's reproach that which really is to his praise; as when they refer to his humble origin, and say that they can remember the time when no one would trust him to the extent of a five pound note, and when he hardly knew, from day to day, how he should get bread to eat. They "can't see" that it is very greatly to the man's honour that he has struggled through such difficulties and made himself what he is. Said one of those envious people to a man who had been the architect of his own fortune—"Why, Sir, I remember when you were only 'boots' at an inn." "Yes," was the reply, "and if you had been 'boots' there you would have remained 'boots' to this day." And as we are apt to regard persons with prejudice, so we are apt to think of principles, political and religious. A man is brought up in certain notions which, without examination, he believes to be right, and all ideas to the contrary are, without examination, pronounced to be wrong. He "can't see" anything good in them. On such a man evidence and argument are generally wasted. What a farce, for instance, is most of the political speech-making that goes on at the time of an election! What a mistake if the deluded speakers suppose that anything they may say will convince their opponents, as if anyone went to a political meeting to be convinced, or in a convincible state of mind! The speaker ought to know

enough of human nature to be himself convinced of one thing—namely, that the sounder his reasoning, the more unanswerable his arguments, the less likely are they to have the desired effect upon those persons, cased in prejudice, who probably constitute nineteen-twentieths of the persons whom he wishes to bring over to his way of thinking. And very much theological controversy is, for the same reason, ineffectual to convince and to convert. Such unhappily is the strength of prejudice, that it closes men's eyes against the clearest demonstration, so that they "can't see it." Prejudice has been a great obstacle to human progress, an obstacle perhaps almost as great as ignorance. It has stood obstinately, stupidly, in the way of almost every reform and every improvement; it has been the source of much injustice and much cruelty; it has kept men in error who, but for its bad influence, would have been led into truth; it has, most unfairly, laid men under suspicion, and darkened and damaged reputations that did not deserve to suffer. Now, in regard both to persons and to principles, we ought to be too manly, too honest, too generous, and too much concerned to know and to honour truth to allow prejudice thus to blind us. I have given credit to the honest doubt that says "I can't see it;" but when "I can't see it" is the expression of prejudice, and especially when we find *ourselves* saying it under the influence of prejudice, let us show it no mercy.

Once more,—most commonly of all, "I can't see it" is the expression of passion. Take, for instance, the passion of anger. Well does an old proverb say, "an angry man opens his mouth and shuts his eyes." He "can't see" how ugly and hateful he looks, how much he looks like what one should think a devil must be when he is in a rage. He "can't see" what a fool he is making of himself, what a laughing stock he is to his neighbours; and he "can't see" the sorrow and remorse which he

is preparing for himself through giving way to the violence of his temper. It is quite possible he may commit murder or manslaughter ; rather probable that he will be guilty of some assault, for which he will have to answer before the magistrate ; and very certain that he will say or do something of which, when he cools down and comes to his senses, he will have reason to be very much ashamed ; but he "can't see it." "Extremes meet;" and, to go from one passion to another, and that its opposite—love, quite as much as hatred, makes men blind, blind even to a proverb. Two young people fall in love with one another, and although it is plain enough to everybody else that they can't afford to marry, or that they are quite unfit to make each other happy, they "can't see it." Similarly, parental love, in its blind partiality thinking its own geese swans, "can't see" any fault in the objects of its affections, "can't see" that they need discipline, "can't see" that sometimes a sharp chiding or a pretty smart chastening would do them a world of good. Another blinding passion is the love of money. Men hastening to be rich and tempted by promising speculations "can't see" the risks they run ; and another thing they "can't see" is this—that, even if they succeed to the utmost extent of their expectations and their hopes, they will probably do so at far too great a price. They "can't see" that "gold may be bought too dear ;" that if health of body and peace of mind are to be paid for wealth, it is a bad bargain. Divine truth solemnly says—"What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" but "they can't see it." The passion for luxury and display throws dust into men's eyes. They go on and on in extravagance, and "can't see" that the end of such a course is a break down, leading, it may be, to beggary. The gambler pursues a path which is pretty sure to lead to ruin and disgrace ; such is the fate of most men who take to that line of life ; but,

reason and remonstrate and warn as you will, the probability is that he "can't see it." Those passions which find their gratification in licentious indulgences have the like blinding tendency. Before the drunkard's eyes other drunkards are, day by day, out off, thus giving him solemn warning ; but he "can't see it." Vice, in its various forms, degrades, beggars, breaks down, and destroys thousands of its votaries ; hardly a newspaper appears that does not present some tale of shame, of horror, and of woe, the result of sensual lust and passion ; but the profligate "can't see it,"—at all events, "can't see" in such facts reasons why he should turn from his evil ways and lead a sober, righteous, and godly life. Well, if people "can't see" or "won't see" these things in time, they will have to see them when it is too late. "In hell the rich voluptuary lifted up his eyes." Pity he had not lifted them up when he was on earth, or at all events opened them to see whither he was going ; and many are going to the same place who "can't or won't see it," until seeing it will be of no use.

Let us beware of "I can't see it," so far as it expresses ignorance of what we ought to know, and so far as it expresses the blindness of pride, of prejudice, and of passion. Let us be wide awake ; let us keep our eyes open ; let us ponder the path of our feet ; let us keep a good look-out, so as to see, and to see in time, every temptation, every snare, every danger. "To be forewarned is to be forearmed." Beware of the block-head's lamentation—"had I wist!" "A wise man's eyes are in his head, but the fool walketh in darkness,"—"a prudent man foreseeth the evil and hideth himself, but the simple pass on and are punished."—Such is Solomon's comment upon "I can't see it."

ERRATUM IN "I DON'T CARE."

Page 105, for "printed with figures," read "painted with figures."

“DO THYSELF NO HARM.”

The apostle Paul was often sent to prison for preaching the Gospel. On one occasion, at a place called Philippi, he and his companion Silas, after having been beaten with many stripes, were thrust into a dark and stifling dungeon, where their feet were made fast in the stocks, the gaoler having been charged to keep them safely. The night came on, and the two Christian men spent their time in prayer and praise. “Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken ; and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, drew out his sword and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying—“Do thyself no harm, for we are all here.” That is the source whence I take the title of this lecture,—St. Paul’s very seasonable interference to prevent a man from killing himself.

But you will say—We are not killing ourselves ; we have no intention of killing ourselves ; there is no fear of our killing ourselves ; and as to these words spoken by St. Paul to a man who was about to plunge his sword into his own heart, what have these words or any such words to do with us ? Well, I hope that none of you are killing yourselves, that none of you are likely to kill yourselves ; though it is very possible that some one in this assembly is pursuing a course which, if continued

in, must lead to self-destruction in one form or another. For to kill himself a man need not stab himself, nor shoot himself, nor hang himself, nor drown himself, nor poison himself; there are other ways of going about this dismal business. Nor need a man, in order to kill himself, intend to do so. Self-destruction may be as far as possible from his thoughts, or, if he think of it at all, he may think of it with perfect horror, and feel that, come what will, he will always love life and hate and fear death too much to commit what the newspapers call "the rash act" of self-destruction. But there is much unintentional self-destruction. For instance, and it is a very common instance, when a man meets with a fatal accident as the result of intoxication, he may fairly be said to kill himself; or when a man dies, though without accident, through excessive drinking, the same thing may be said of him. But we may do ourselves harm, and very grievous harm, without doing, either directly or indirectly, the kind and the amount of harm which that distracted Philippian gaoler intended to do himself. St. Paul's word of caution may be applied to many things beside self-destruction in the commission of suicide. The apostle's words may be understood thus—"Do thyself *no* harm."

Occasions may now and then occur in the course of a man's life in which it is his duty, if not to do himself harm, to run the risk of doing it, and so to act that harm comes to him. "Do thyself no harm" is, like most other rules, one that admits of exceptions. It must not be pressed too far, or its tendency will be to make us very selfish, and to repress all that nobleness and generosity of spirit which induce a man to sacrifice his own comfort for that of another. I do not know that, after he became a Christian, the great man who thus spoke to his gaoler ever did himself any harm; but he did what was next door to it,—he so acted that privation and peril, and at last a violent,

death, were his lot. On the principle of "do thyself no harm," carried out in every case, St. Paul would never have been the laborious, self-forgetting, self-sacrificing man he was. This is one of the glories of the Christian religion, that it teaches men and inclines them and enables them to do for the sake of others many a thing that is, in some respects, harmful to themselves. Is there any case in which, through some impoverishment of myself, some fatigue to myself, some danger to myself, I can save my neighbour from suffering or help him in his suffering? — If I be a Christian man, I must remember Him who is my Master and my example, who allowed himself to be nailed to the cross, and who shed His blood for the welfare of others. I must not be over particular about "doing myself no harm," or about keeping out of harm's way. Well then, I hope we shall understand that the maxim "do thyself no harm" is never to stand in the way of our performing those duties which either the love of God or the love of our neighbour requires us to perform, though such duties may expose us to suffering, to loss, and to peril.

There are many harmful things in the world which will probably enough reach us and cause us suffering and sorrow without our seeking them. Accidents, illnesses, want, temptations, mistakes made by others or by ourselves,—harmful things which, with all the care and all the prudence we can exercise, we shall not altogether escape. Quite harm enough will thus be done us without our adding to it by doing harm to ourselves. And although men are supposed to be keenly alive to their own interests, so much so indeed, that "do thyself no harm" might seem to be everybody's maxim, it will, I believe, be found upon examination, that most of the harms we suffer in mind, body, and estate, are self-inflicted. In most instances a man is himself his worst, his most dangerous

enemy—himself or something in himself. It may be indolence, it may be anxiousness,—it may be pride, it may be a lack of self-respect,—it may be timidity, it may be impudence,—it may be extravagance, it may be greed ; or it may be envy, or a discontented spirit, or a hasty temper, or a tongue that is too long or too loose, or sensual lusts and passions. These are the things that do us harm. We may have foes without, very many, very bitter, very cruel, and they may have it in their power to injure us, but these foes within the camp of a man's own soul are the foes that do him most mischief ; and seldom need a man fear the harm that others can do him, provided he is very careful to "do himself no harm." If all who suffer, or have suffered grievous harm, were faithfully to tell us whence such harm has arisen, we should find that, in many cases, if not in most, it has been self-inflicted. There are two occupations that are very common, two trades that are always busy ; one is followed by people who "make rods for their own backs," the other by those who "drive nails into their own coffins." And some are doing themselves harm when they fancy, when they firmly believe, that they are doing themselves good. Of such is the covetous man, who, in his anxiety to gain the world, is all the time losing his soul. Thus, I think, you will see that, although it certainly does appear an unnatural thing that men should do themselves harm, it is a thing very commonly and constantly done in various ways and in various degrees. My friends, there is nothing that we have such reason to be afraid of and to guard against as that power, that confederation of powers, by means of which we can do ourselves harm. I should not be surprised if some of you know by dismal experience that what I say is true ; some of you who know that, although this person and that person may be in part responsible for the wretchedness you suffer, the

lion's share of such responsibility rests with yourselves. I do not say that this is the case with all sufferers. I hope that I am not so hard, so heartless, so inconsiderate, or so unjust, as not to admit that in many cases the harm suffered is altogether from without; that there are many people who have not the strength, either of body or of mind, to fight with and to overcome the powers of evil that surround them and press upon them. Life is a great struggle, and many are not strong enough to stand it. We must pity them, we must help them, we must not blame them for not doing what they cannot do, and what, were we in their place, we could not do ourselves.

Now if you would "do yourself no harm," my friend, I would say, for one thing, don't be idle. "Idle!" you reply, "there's no fear of my being idle, excepting when I can get no work to do; my own wants and those of my family won't allow me to be idle; I daresay there's more idleness in yourself than in me. I am up every morning by five o'clock, and I work from six to six most days of the week, and that is a great deal more than you do." Well, don't let us have any words about that. I daresay you do work harder than I; only I hope you don't think, as many people do, that a minister of religion works only on Sunday; for I can tell you that very often the Sunday, with three services to conduct and three discourses to preach, is, to a minister of religion, at all events to some ministers of religion, the easiest day of all the seven. When I say don't be idle, I refer more especially to your leisure time, to your evenings, your Saturday afternoons, and to the days, it may be weeks, when you have no work to do in your business. Find something to do in such times; for depend upon it that, as the proverb says, "doing nothing is doing ill;" that, as another proverb says, "an idle brain is the devil's workshop;" and that, as yet another proverb says,

"when the devil finds a man idle he sets him to work." It is in their leisure time that men are most likely to do themselves harm; there is not much fear of their injuring themselves while they are at work. Find for leisure hours some harmless, sensible, and useful occupation, if for no other reason, for this very good reason,—that so you may be kept out of mischief.

If you would "do yourself no harm," take great care as to the friendships you form and the company you keep. "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." "Evil communications corrupt good manners." "He who goes with the wolves learns to howl;" and "he who lies down with dogs will rise up with fleas." "A hog bemired is never easy until he has bemired others." "A bad companion invites you to hell," and does his best to persuade you to accept the invitation. Rely upon it "no man can be your friend who is God's enemy." It is a wretched choice when a man chooses as his friends those who in reality are his most destructive and deadly foes; those who will instruct him in evil and entice him to evil; who will laugh at his scruples, undermine his moral principles, and make him like to themselves. And it is to no purpose that, when the mischief is done, this misguided being throws the blame upon his companions, and says "they have done me this harm." I have heard men of this sort, and I have heard their friends also speak with great indignation of those vile and vicious companions, as if he who had been led astray by them were an innocent lamb who had unfortunately got amongst wolves;—"a better lad there never was than he, until he got linked in with those scoundrels." But he has done *himself* the harm by laying himself open to the harm that they have done him. Pray, who is to blame if a man wilfully and needlessly exposes himself to bad weather, gets wet to the skin, and so catches cold? We don't commonly lay

the fault upon the weather ; we think that the man has done himself this harm. And so with him who, by wilfully and needlessly going into bad company, exposes his mind and his heart to evil influences, and thereby gets morally corrupted and destroyed ; he does this harm to himself. Something is to be said for him if he be very young and very inexperienced ; something is to be said for him if he have not been taught better ; in such cases he is more sinned against than sinning. But surely, if a lad has common sense, he must know that swearing, drinking, gambling, and whoring companions can do him no good. If he be ruined he is ruined with his own consent ; and he who is ruined with his own consent ruins himself. "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and pass away." "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

If you would do yourself no harm, mind in what amusements you indulge. Amusements people will have, and I suppose must have. And there are amusements that are not only harmless but also healthy ; and there are amusements which, if only they are very carefully kept apart from drinking and gambling and blackguardly society, are not to be condemned. The worst of it is that so many amusements which "in themselves" are harmless, are made harmful by the things that so commonly attend them. Now, never allow yourself to be deceived by the harmlessness of an amusement "in itself." Can you have it "in itself?" Can you have it apart from all the accompaniments and the tendencies that are bad? Or if you have it "in itself," and in all its abstract harmlessness in one place, will your passion for it never tempt you to seek it where you don't have it in that shape, but where betting

and drinking and people of very shady character are associated with it? Some time ago a man told me, with great energy of expression, that, if he had his will, the first thing he would do would be to shut up every public billiard room in the town. "Ah," you say, "he was a parson, or a methodist, or some other meddling fool!" No, he was not; but he was a man who had lost his character, lost his health, lost his money, lost his friends, lost the last chance of success in life, and brought himself to beggary and shame, and he ascribed it all to his having given way to the temptation held out by the billiard table. "By their fruits ye shall know them." We must look not at amusements "in themselves;" we must consider their tendencies, as their tendencies are shown by their results. "There is no pot so ugly as not to find a pot-lid," and there is no amusement so dangerous as not to find some one who has something to say for it on the ground that it is harmless enough "in itself." What does it matter how harmless it is "in itself" if, brought out into actual contact with life, it does injury? Gunpowder is harmless enough "in itself;" every combustible and explosive material is harmless enough "in itself,"—that is, harmless as long as you let it alone. And so with these amusements; they are harmless "in themselves"—as long as you let them alone. You say,—Well, a man can go to the billiard room or to the skittle alley, or he can sit down at a card table, and he need not bet, and he need not drink; he can just enjoy the exercise and the pleasurable excitement, and come away none the worse, but possibly the better. I am not going to discuss what a man *can do*; I look at what men commonly *do*; and I say there is danger in every amusement with which drinking or betting is associated, and in partaking of which you get into the company of people whose character is out at the elbows. Amongst the amusements which I think you will be

rather chary of if you would "do yourself no harm" is the theatre. I know that for the theatre many apologies are made; it has even been pronounced a great moral teacher, and the handmaid of religion. Perhaps it will be said that the theatre "in itself" is harmless. Well, what is the theatre "in itself?" I suppose that "in itself" we must include the performances. And are these harmless? Is their tendency always favourable, or at all events never unfavourable, to morality and religion? Of several well-known and highly-popular Operas it is only the plain and honest truth to say that the subject of one is incest and murder, that of another unbridled debauchery, that of another the career of a whore. And of all the cant that ever was uttered, that is the hollowest, falsest, most audacious, and most contemptible, which asserts that the design and the tendency of such exhibitions is to produce a wholesome horror of vice. Indecency, immorality, and crime,—these are what, in very many instances, the stage exhibits; and if it were not for such dirt, the play-house would very soon be voted slow, and forsaken. Often the more dirt and nastiness there are in the performance the fuller is the house. The theatre "in itself" is nothing to boast of, when the nature of its performances is considered; but what about the theatre, not exactly "in itself," but in its belongings or in its hangers-on? Are all who frequent the place decent and respectable people? Are there none there who tempt to vice and debauchery? Can you go and come without the slightest danger of moral contamination; go and come, feeling that you have got good, that at all events you have got no harm, not even so much as an impure thought? Well, if it be so, I can only say that the theatre has been most shamefully belied. The Singing Saloon is another place which a man who would "do himself no harm" might as well not

enter. If he do go, what he sees and hears there is not likely to improve either his head or his heart. It is true he may see nothing worse than three or four poor fellows who, for so much a night, exhibit themselves with blackened faces, capering on a stage; and he may hear nothing more than some very silly comic and still more silly sentimental songs; and surely it is a poor mind, a very poor mind, that can derive pleasure from such amusement as that. But in many cases these singing saloons and free-and-easys, or whatever other names they go by, are schools of mischief. Lads are tempted to steal money that they may attend them; young men and young women sit there drinking; and, when the performance breaks up, many of them are just in that state of excitement which leads to ruin. Not to pursue this subject further, I think that I am correct in saying that amusements, unwisely chosen and immoderately indulged in, are the bane of life to thousands. Even apart from their positively demoralising effects, they occupy time that might be spent in far better and more profitable ways; and he may be said to do himself harm who is not diligent and careful to do himself all the good he can.

If you would "do yourself no harm," mind what books you read. Ability to read is an invaluable acquirement, without which, in these days, a man is little better than a wild beast; but the ability to read may be turned to bad as well as to good account. I daresay you have heard a pack of cards called the Devil's Bible. Well, I would not go so far as to say that, though I believe that the betting and the quarrelling that are often connected with card playing go a long way towards justifying such a name for cards. And whether cards be the Devil's Bible or not, they are, in common with dice and billiards, and some other things, very often used by the devil, as he leads his poor foolish victims by the nose. But whatever danger

there may be in cards, which of course are harmless "in themselves," though some of them *are* called *knaves*, there are other things that far more deserve to be called the Devil's Bible. Some, perhaps, would say—this is the name for all infidel writings; and when the infidelity is spiced with indecency and with scoffs and sneers, the Devil's Bible is just the name that its efforts deserve. But most of all deserving of such a name are lewd songs, lewd plays, lewd poems, and lewd stories; and songs and plays and poems and stories that set forth vice in any of its forms, and set it forth in such ways as to make it attractive; and there is many a newspaper report of filthy and abominable profligacy that is just a leaf of the Devil's Bible. Books that would pollute your thoughts, excite sensual passions, familiarise you with vice and crime, you had better have nothing to do with such. "Talk of the devil, and he will appear," says the proverb; and it is just as true that if you read of the devil he will appear. This is no stupid superstition which the enlightenment of modern times has exploded; it is a sad and solemn truth. If men, whether by talking or reading, get their minds full of devilish thoughts, and their hearts full of devilish passions, the devil will appear, not in the shape of an ugly beast with horns and claws or cloven hoofs, but in a far uglier shape than that; he will appear in the devilish conduct of those who have imbibed such devilish ideas and feelings. If you would "do yourself no harm" read wholesome books, or don't read any books at all.

If you would "do yourself no harm," beware of drink. I confess that I cannot join altogether with those who throw the blame upon the public-house to such an extent as almost to set up an excusa for the men who frequent it. It is bad, no doubt, to put temptation in a man's way; but I can't but think that, unless the man be an idiot, the greater part of the blame

rests on himself if he yields to that temptation and gets drunk. Other shops beside the drinking shops are temptations in men's way ; and they tempt some to steal, and a great many to buy or to go on credit for things which they can't afford. But in these cases we lay the *entire* blame upon those who yield to the temptation. And so, if the exceptional character of the trade justifies our blaming in some measure those who multiply places for the sale of drink, still, unless, as I said before, the man who yields to the temptation be an idiot, he will honestly admit that he is himself chiefly to blame, and that the harm done is harm which he does to himself. But alas ! to how many might this warning be addressed, with special reference to intoxication,—“do thyself no harm ;” for of all the harmful things that are at work in this country, there is none to be compared with intemperance. What harm it does to the body ! what harm to the soul ! what harm to a man's business ! what harm to his family ! what harm in every way ! And yet it is almost in vain that we say “do thyself no harm” to the man who has entered on this course ; our best, if not our only chance, is with those who are still in the path of sobriety. Let them ponder the matter well ; let them observe and study the poor wretches whose miserable and disgusting appearance may at least do some good in serving as a warning ; let them think whether all the pleasure, such as it is, which these degraded beings ever derived from drink, is a compensation for the state to which they have brought themselves.

If you would “do yourself no harm,” see to it that you spend your Sundays wisely and well. We have not time to discuss the grounds for the religious observance of the Sunday ; we have not time to consider how far the old commandment, “Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath-day,” is properly

applicable to the Lord's day. But never mind about that ; let us look at the matter in a practical light. The Sunday is a day of rest, and Christian people make it an especial day of worship. By many it is perverted to bad ends ; it is spent in idleness, in pleasure-seeking, and in dissipation ; and it is a great pity that such people have a Sunday at all. It does them no good, but a great deal of harm, and it would be better for them to have to spend the day in work. Instead of being the best day of the seven, it is the worst : being not the Lord's day, but rather the devil's. I do not go in for such a strict observance of the Sabbath as would forbid a man's spending a portion of it in recruiting his health, and enjoying the fresh air and the beauties of nature in a good long country walk. Men confined in town and to their work all the rest of the week ought not to be denied or grudged such freedom as that. But there is danger in making Sunday a day of pleasure-seeking. Thousands of men, who have ended their career in wretchedness and crime, have confessed that the first fatal step was carelessness in regard to the religious observance of the Lord's day.

Above all, and I may say inclusive of all that I have mentioned, if you would "do yourself no harm"—fear, love, and serve God. True religion is the best safeguard against all the kinds of harm that we are so apt to do ourselves ; it clothes us in "the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left ;" it will defend us against temptation in whatever form temptation may present itself ; it will teach us self-control ; it will elevate our tastes above everything that is degrading ; it will form such habits and build up such a character as will be most conducive to health, to happiness, and to prosperity. And not only so, but to whatever extent you may have done yourself harm by foolishness and by sin, true religion is that, and that only, which can remedy the

mischief, and restore you to soundness and to safety. Men who have harmed themselves, and all but destroyed themselves, body and soul, have, on becoming truly Christian men, been most marvellously restored; "old things have passed away, and all things have become new." Believe me, my friends, I am very earnest in saying this; I speak what I know, and testify what I have seen. The one great harmful thing is sin, sin in thought, sin in feeling, sin in word, sin in deed; and the one cure for sin and for all the harm it does is the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and I believe that, until and unless we heartily take to this as our safeguard against the harm which we have not done ourselves, and our cure for the harm that we have done ourselves, all other things that we may do will be but so much poor patching and tinkering that will never stand. Whether we wish to be preserved from doing ourselves harm, and delivered from the consequences temporal and eternal of having done ourselves harm, the shortest, the simplest, the surest, and indeed the only course, is that which Paul pointed out to the gaoler at Philippi, when, after having said to him—"Do thyself no harm," he added,— "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

“LUCK.”

The words *luck*, *lucky*, and *unlucky*, often indicate nothing more than some ridiculous superstition which commands more or less of serious belief. The number of things which are supposed to promise good luck or to threaten bad luck is nothing like so great now as it was in times gone by; but the advancement of knowledge has not altogether dispelled the superstition connected with luck. In former ages many days were regarded as unlucky; days on which it was considered dangerous to start on a journey, or to begin any work of importance. Of such days there were seven in the month of January, three in February, three in March, and so on; every month of the year having some of those dark and dangerous days, and October being the best month of the twelve, because in it occurred only one such day. Something of the superstitious belief in unlucky days still lingers amongst us. For some unreasonable reason Friday has been regarded as especially unlucky. It is not long since most sailors were extremely unwilling to begin a voyage on a Friday; and there are thousands of people who, rather than get married on a Friday, would never get married at all. Good luck or bad have been supposed to attach to certain numbers. When lotteries were in fashion, tickets marked with certain numbers were supposed by many people to be more likely than any others to come out prizes. The *Spectator* contains a paper on this subject which gives many

curious instances ; amongst them this (though whether fun or fact the *Spectator* does not say)—that a zealous dissenter, who was a great enemy to Popery, and believed that bad men were the most fortunate in this world, was willing to lay two to one on the number 666, because that is the number of the beast spoken of in the Book of Revelation. To the present day one number stands pre-eminent as unlucky, and that is the number thirteen. Many well-informed people have a perfect horror of a dinner party composed of thirteen persons. I once knew a Liverpool merchant who, finding that if all his expected guests came, the total number of the party would be thirteen, wrote to one of them and begged him to keep away. The notion I believe is that one of the number will die before the year is out, that one being the first who rises from the table, who therefore will probably be the soberest man in the lot, and worthy of a better fate. I think it was Sydney Smith who said that thirteen is an unlucky number when there is dinner for no more than twelve. Dreams, too, are, according to their character, lucky and unlucky ; and, as far as I can gather, the unlucky ones are the more numerous, and produce the deeper impression. There are very many people who, though not otherwise superstitious, allow themselves to be made anxious and unhappy by a remarkable dream, or by any dream which the old women of both sexes have pronounced unlucky. Then there are some things which it is or has been considered lucky to possess. A crooked sixpence, for example ; of which one may indeed say this, that as long as you have it you are not altogether without money ; but I should think that a sensible man would prefer a straight shilling to the crookedest sixpence that ever was seen. A child's caul is still greatly prized as a preservative against shipwreck ; and you may have seen in the newspapers an advertisement, addressed to master mariners, to the

effect that some one has such an article for sale. In old times a child's caul was eagerly sought after even by those acute and knowing men the lawyers; for they believed that, if they had one about them, neither judge nor jury could withstand the persuasive force of their arguments.

It would require volumes to notice all the superstitions that have been connected with the idea of luck. Most of them, however, are now utterly discarded, and if spoken of at all, they are spoken of in jest. The lucky days and lucky dreams and lucky signs have, perhaps, done little harm; they have made people happy; possibly, in some cases, men have been foolish enough to rely upon them instead of taking proper care to secure by wisdom, prudence, and diligence the desired success. But there is no doubt that the omens of bad luck, which appear to have been far the more numerous, have made multitudes of people very unhappy. And if there be many stories, and stories unquestionably true, of the bad luck following the sign, we need not wonder at that. Signs considered to be unlucky are, many of them, very likely to be fulfilled, because they frighten and unnerve those who believe in them, and so unfit them for battling against misfortune. If a man has a certain dream which he thinks is a sign that he won't live long, it will so prey upon his mind as to make him liable to disease, and the dream may be fulfilled apart from all mystery, except the mystery that a rational being can be so foolish as to be affected by such a sign. And belief in such absurdities is not quite extinct. In many parts of the world men are the wretched victims of ten thousand superstitious fears; but amongst ourselves these fears yet linger; amongst ourselves there is still the trade of the fortune-teller; Friday has not quite lost its unlucky character; there are big strong men who would sit very uneasily at a table round which were

assembled just thirteen persons. I need hardly say that these superstitious notions of the lucky and the unlucky are extremely unworthy of us as men, and especially unworthy of us if we have any belief in the Christian religion. We ought to know and to feel persuaded that events, both happy and unhappy, are ordered and regulated in some better and more intelligible manner than these superstitions would imply. An old writer, after having given a list of unlucky days,—of days which, no doubt, he himself regarded with some measure of dread, wisely adds these words,—“But, notwithstanding, I will trust in the Lord;” and such trust will raise us far above the foolish fears with which men have allowed themselves to be depressed and tormented through the adoption, to a greater or less extent, of superstitious ideas in connection with luck.

But there is an idea of luck which has more of fatalism in it than of superstition, if fatalism itself be not superstition. The ancients represented the universe as under the absolute control of three horrid old women called the Fates, who shaped the destinies of all mankind; and though the fable of the Fates is numbered amongst the things that were, there still prevails, rather extensively, a belief that, apart from character and from conduct, good fortune is the destiny of one man and bad fortune that of another. “Give a man luck,” says the proverb, “and throw him into the sea;” and another proverb says, “an ounce of fortune is better than a pound of forecast;” and another, “He that was born under a three-halfpenny planet will never be worth twopence.” And certainly one may well be inclined sometimes to think that in luck, destiny, fortune, fate, there is something that is beyond our control, and something that is quite independent of all merit and all effort on our part. For there are people who, as the saying is, “always light on their feet.” They are neither more

sensible nor more diligent than others ; but somehow it comes to pass that everything goes well with them. Even in speculating, even in betting, they are always or almost always lucky. "They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men." For others, quite their equals, perhaps their superiors in wisdom, in energy, in diligence, in moral character, do what they will, never get on. Misfortune mars every effort they put forth ; every project they undertake comes to grief ; all things appear to be against them. There are some men whose success, others whose unsuccess, is a great mystery.

Now it will be well for the successful man, whose prosperity is not due to his own talents, or his own efforts, and for the unsuccessful man, who, in spite of all his care and toil, seems born to adversity, to consider whether there be not some truth in the old saying,—“Man proposes, but God disposes.” You may perhaps choose to refer all to chance ; but that is a very comfortless and unsatisfactory doctrine. No ! there is a Supreme Ruler over all, “who raiseth up one and putteth down another,” and “ordereth all things after the counsel of his own will.” And not only so, the Bible teaches us that God is our friend, that God is our Father, that he is neither indifferent to us nor hostile to us, that he loves us and does us good. Yes, you say, the prosperous man may easily enough believe that, and find great satisfaction in it, seeing in all his success God’s smile, feeling that He daily loadeth him with benefits ; it will do that man good ; it should make him humble, it should make him grateful, it should make him bountiful ; it should teach him not to judge his unsuccessful neighbour harshly, not to treat him with contempt, if he believes that all he himself possesses is the undeserved gift of God : but how is the unsuccessful man to reconcile himself to this idea of a Divine Providence,

when Providence meets out to him such a scant measure of happiness, and continually fills his cup with draught after draught of bitter sorrow? Well, my unsuccessful friend, you know that you should do your best to reconcile yourself to some explanation of your lot. You are sure that it cannot be explained by any defect in your character and conduct, for you are an abler man, and a steadier man, and a more diligent man far than that neighbour of yours who has prospered so much; and I shall suppose that you cannot explain your unsucccess on the ground that you started in life in circumstances less favourable to success than those which surrounded that prosperous neighbour. What will you say? That it has been all just a matter of chance? or will you talk bitterly about "fortune favouring fools?" or will you utter some meaningless stuff about your unhappy destiny? Look this idea of Divine Providence steadily in the face, and see whether some comfort is not to be derived from it even by such a one as you. At first I grant that it does look very much as if Divine Providence were very partial and very unfair, in dealing with your neighbour so bountifully, and with you in so different a manner. But it may be that Providence has dealt and is dealing with you to the full as kindly as with him. The lessons to be learned from adversity are often much better than any that can be learned from prosperity; the character that is formed amidst the storms and battles of a life full of difficulty, disappointment, and trouble, is likely to be a far stronger, purer, nobler, in all respects better character than that which is formed in continued sunshine and unbroken calm. If this life were all, the strange inequalities of fortune would perhaps be quite inexplicable; we should have to say that it is very much a matter of chance and of accident whether a man with the best principles, the best intentions, and the best abilities succeed in the

world or fail ; but when this life is looked upon, as I believe most thoughtful men do look upon it, in the light of a trial and a training for another, those inequalities which we feel to be inevitable, which we are certain are ordered by a power superior to our own, assume quite a different aspect. They are God's ways of preparing men for what he has in store for them ; and probably, those for whom he has in store the greatest honours and the greatest blessings are those whom he most tries in this short life. All things considered, then, it may be that the unprosperous man's luck, if I may use the word, is better than that of his prosperous neighbour. It is very difficult to judge from mere worldly success and unsuccess who is fortunate and who is unfortunate, who has good luck and who has bad. It may be true that "one is born with a silver spoon in his mouth, and another with a wooden ladle," but what of that ?—he with "the wooden ladle" may be the more highly favoured. What men call luck, good luck, wonderful luck, thumping luck, may prove anything but an advantage. "The prosperity of fools shall destroy them." We should not be so ready as we are to pronounce one man lucky and another unlucky. We should wait and see whether the good luck and the bad luck are permanent, and we should know what effects the prosperity and the adversity produce upon men's hearts and lives. If the prosperous man's prosperity make him cold and hard and grasping,—if the more he has the more he wants,—if the abundance of this world's good cause him to think of nothing but this world's good—if, gaining the world, he thereby loses his soul,—I don't call his luck good ; and if the unsuccessful man's trials and disappointments have the effect of keeping him humble, of making his heart tender towards those who, like himself, are often in trouble, and of causing him to seek and to secure a better inheritance hereafter, I don't call his luck bad. "Crosses are ladders that lead to heaven."

Thus, in cases in which there are very great inequalities of condition, and yet there is nothing in the character, the abilities, or the conduct of the men to explain such inequalities,—instead of talking about blind chance, or capricious fortune, or unhappy fate, it is surely the wisest and most wholesome course to fall back upon the thought of an over-ruling Providence; of an all-wise, all-righteous, and all-merciful God, who, in ways that we may well believe in, though we cannot understand them, is ever working for the best, and sending this kind of luck and that, not only according to His own sovereign will and pleasure, but also for our welfare, here or hereafter, or both here and hereafter; so that *all* the luck *He* sends is good.

Mainly, however, what we call our luck depends upon ourselves. God gives us all more or less of the stuff out of which our luck is to be made, but we have ourselves to make it. It is not the bounty and, what some might profanely call, the niggardliness of Providence that determines our luck; it is the use or the abuse, the care or the neglect, of what Providence bestows. And one man makes good luck of the little Providence has given him, while another makes bad luck of the much that he has received from the same source. Lord Bacon wisely says—"It cannot be denied but outward accidents conduce much to fortune . . . but, chiefly, the mould of a man's fortune is in his own hands." We speak with admiration of men who are the architects of their own fortunes, as if such men were comparatively rare; but that is a mis-quoted saying; in its original shape it is this—"every man is the architect of his own fortune." Every man, be his fortune good or bad, he is the architect of it, at least within those limits which we have just been discussing, the limits of what Divine Providence is pleased to bestow as the material of which the fortune is to be framed. By making a fortune we commonly understand

managing to acquire a good round sum of money, and there are not very many who do that ; but every man makes a fortune of some sort. The wealthy banker, retired to his country residence, has made his fortune ; the penniless pauper, retired to the workhouse, has made his fortune too. Day by day the industrious, thrifty, saving man is making *his* fortune ; and day by day the indolent, intemperate, wasteful man is making *his*, and luck is what each man has the sense or the no sense to make it. There is a certain noble family in England whose motto is —“ Conduct is Fate,”—and it were well if that motto were impressed upon us all. It may be going rather too far to say that conduct alone is fate, and that every man having the power to shape his conduct has the power to shape his fate ; but certainly conduct has a great deal more to do with determining what a man's fate shall be, both in this world and the next, than anything else or all things else put together. You meet with a man who complains bitterly of what he calls his bad luck ; he tells you that he has been exceedingly unfortunate ; he has tried this and he has tried that ; he has applied here and enquired there ; but all to no purpose. Now, when you investigate such a man's history and character, the chances are ten to one that he is either a fool or something worse ; his misfortunes are simply the result of his stupidity or of his misconduct. It is no wonder that he has had bad luck ; nothing else was possible considering how he has behaved himself. Bad conduct is in fact the source of most of the bad luck that people meet with ; and when to the bad luck that springs from bad conduct, we add the bad luck that springs from foolish conduct, we shall find very little bad luck left to be accounted for on other grounds. I have met with a great many unlucky men ; but I have hardly ever met with one who was not a blockhead, an idler, a sot, or a knave.

If you would have good luck, I should say that, for one thing, it would be wise for you to have as little as possible to do with matters in which luck is a mere chance, and that a chance probably not much in your favour. What I mean is this, to put it in plainer terms,—avoid every form of gambling. Of course, in gambling men sometimes have good luck, in so far as the getting of money is concerned. Easily, rapidly, a single bet may put more money into a man's pocket than he could earn by months and years of hard work ; and such cases present a strong temptation. But whatever be the success that is reported to you, I would say don't allow yourself to be tempted; you are very likely to lose what you stake ; and if you win, the more you win the more dangerous it may be for you, for such success will draw you on and on, until you are altogether carried away by the excitement of gambling, and lose all taste for a life of patient industry. Don't *try* your luck, but *make* it.

If you would have good luck, it will behove you to be industrious. Idleness is the cause of a great deal of the bad luck that we see in the world. When a man won't make the best use of his time, when he is too fond of taking his ease, when he likes pleasure a great deal more than labour, when he does not as much but as little work as he can, and when, through his indolence and carelessness, he makes himself an utterly useless fellow who can't be depended upon, it is no wonder that he has bad luck ; the bad luck of making scanty wages, the bad luck of being very often out of work, and, consequently, the bad luck of being hard-up and in debt. In hard times, such as we have been having lately and have still, it requires all possible industry and diligence to escape such bad luck ; in the very best times, good luck is out of the question without industry and diligence. Moderate luck, however, luck enough to keep a man out of debt, luck enough to

provide for his wants, is almost sure to be the portion of the man who is industriously inclined, who is a thoroughly earnest and hard worker when he has work to do. It is a great misfortune when a man thinks work a hardship, when his idea of happiness is to have nothing to do, when his feeling is—I only wish that I had what would keep me independent, for then I would never do another stroke of work. Bad luck is pretty sure to be the lot of a lazy lubber like that; and bad luck ought to be his lot.

If you would have good luck, you will have to be patient. Good luck does not often come all at once; it is, in almost all cases, the result of long perseverance in a course of industrious effort. The best luck is that which grows little by little, and every addition to which costs us, I won't say pain, but toil. So don't expect an easy life, and don't covet an easy life; expect much that is difficult, much that is unpleasant, and be prepared for it. Beware of indulging the thought that if you were in some other situation, or gave yourself to some other occupation, you would get on better and faster than you do now. Don't make the change unless you have the best possible reasons to believe that it would be an advantage. If ever you feel yourself giving way to a spirit of impatience and discontent, strive against it. We don't see the difficulties that other men have to contend with; and, when we observe them getting on rapidly, we are apt to think that their course is very easy; whereas "every path has its puddles," "every bean has its black," "every grain has its bran," and "every light has its shadow." The fact that you don't succeed very well in one line of things, especially if it be the trade you have been brought up to, is poor evidence of your being likely to succeed in something of which you know little or nothing. So, as a rule, it is best to stick to what you do know, and make the best of it.

"You may go further and fare worse ;" "half a loaf is better than no bread ;" and "leaping out of the frying-pan " may only be "leaping into the fire." If I were to believe some people, every trade is bad, every business is so cut up by competition that it is not worth following ; but, with all this grumbling, discontent and despair, show me, if you can, the trade or business in which nobody prospers. I believe luck, good luck, is to be had in almost every line of occupation, provided men have good sense, industry, and patience.

If you would have good luck, try to be thrifty, economical, saving. But pray sir, asks one, how is a man to save anything out of such wages as working men earn, even when they are in full work? Well, I daresay it is no easy matter to save anything, but the Savings' Banks show that it is not impossible, for it is done. And, more than that, many of those who save money are not men who earn the highest wages, nor those who have to meet the smallest claims. There are men who don't earn more than a pound a week, and who have a numerous family to maintain, who, nevertheless, contrive to put by something. Of course they exercise self-denial, they submit to privation, they carefully avoid all waste, they make things last as long and go as far as possible. And the few pounds which the thrifty man has in the Savings' Bank at the end of the year don't represent all the good luck he has made for himself in the course of the year ; the greater and better part of that good luck consists of the man's victory over the spirit of self-indulgence.

If you would have good luck, above all things you must be sober. When men meet to drink in the public-house, on raising the glass of whiskey or the pot of beer to their lips, they very commonly say,—"*Here's luck !*" and *there is* luck, but of what sort? The toast, if toast it be, fully and truthfully

expressed, would be,—“Here’s very bad luck!” The public-house is a very unlucky place for many of those who frequent it, for there they make acquaintanceships which do them much mischief, and form habits which lead to their ruin; there they lose their money, their senses, their health, their characters, their situations; and that is “the English” of the sentiment,—“Here’s luck.” Inquire into the history of the many poor luckless fellows who are so desperately hard-up that they are driven to beggary and tempted to theft; inquire into the history of those whose luck has lodged them in prison; in almost every case it is the one dismal tale—this bad luck comes from drink. Young men, the question,—What sort of luck are you likely to have in life?—depends upon this more than upon any other one thing,—Do you mean to be sober, and will you be sober, strictly sober, always sober? If so, the question about your luck in life is almost as good as settled. Barring accidents and other things that are beyond your control, you are pretty certain to have a fair share of good luck, you hardly can have very bad luck.

I must add, however, that in the case of married men, the character of their luck will to a very great extent be regulated by the character of their wives. Husband and wife are so far one that good luck in life can hardly be secured unless each helps the other. “A man can’t thrive unless his wife gives him leave.” His industry however great, his toil however hard, his sobriety however strict, his character however good, his wages however high, and his desire to be economical however strong, will avail little if she be slatternly, wasteful, or intemperate. A good wife is the best piece of good luck a man can have.

It is much easier to begin and go on with making for ourselves good luck, than to turn bad luck into good. This is, in

many cases, all but impossible. Men who have for years and years been making bad luck for themselves by indolence, carelessness, changeableness, wastefulness, insobriety, and especially men whose wives have helped them in the manufacture of such bad luck, are not likely to have the heart or the resolution and determination necessary for converting that bad luck into something better. When the vigour of youth is gone, when character is damaged, when bad habits have been formed, there remains very little of the stuff that is needed whereof or whereby to make good luck. I would not say that it is too late. If much has been lost, so much the more reason why the precious little that is left should be turned to the best account. "Don't throw the rope after the bucket," "the helve after the hatchet," or "the saddle after the horse." But if we mean to make good luck for ourselves, in so far as the making of it is in our own hands, we cannot commence too early in life, for "well begun is half done," and "the morning hour has gold in its mouth."

“NEVER DESPAIR.”

In this maxim there is much sense, and it must be admitted that there is some nonsense in it too. Despair is hopelessness in regard to something which we earnestly desire, but fear—and more than fear, believe—that we cannot accomplish or obtain. And when this belief is grounded on certainty the maxim “never despair” is absurd. It is nonsense to say “never despair” to a man who wishes that he could add a cubit to his stature, or that he might live to the age of Methuselah; it is nonsense to say “never despair” to a man who is seventy years old and wishes that he were young again; and notwithstanding the common saying, “while there is life there is hope,” a man may be so plainly and certainly at the point of death, that it would be nonsense, and rather cruel nonsense, to tell him that he may recover, and bid him “never despair.” No, in cases of this kind, where the thing wished for plainly and certainly cannot be obtained, instead of mocking a man by holding out, in the maxim “never despair,” hopes which cannot be realised, let us try to direct his thoughts to something else that is within the bounds of possibility, and encourage him not to despair of that. There are some things of which we must despair, and some of which we ought to despair,—so setting our minds and hearts free from foolish and impracticable desires that we may give ourselves to the attainment of something that is attainable. Buonaparte is reported to have said that the word impossible is a word to be found

only in the dictionary of fools; but I should think that he found it very plainly printed in his own dictionary when he got to St. Helena. Such are the marvels which genius and resolution and perseverance have accomplished, that it is often difficult to determine what is possible and what is not; but when a thing desired is plainly and certainly beyond the limits of the possible, there is no place for the maxim "never despair."

But although our common sense won't allow us to insist upon this word *never*, there are so many people who do despair when they need not and ought not, that this maxim, understood with the limitations just noticed, is one that will do us good, that will prove very helpful to us, encouraging us to perseverance in efforts from which we may be strongly tempted to desist, and in enterprises which we may feel inclined to abandon. For when our hearts, our heads, and our hands are set upon the attainment of some truly desirable object the attainment of which is difficult, there is much in ourselves to suggest despair, and there are always people who will, by their prophecies of unsuccess, try to discourage and dishearten us.

Despair is a very terrible state of mind, which shows itself in many terrible ways. There is probably no bodily suffering anything like so dreadful as the mental anguish of despair. Almost every case of suicide results from this sad condition. The jury returns a verdict of temporary insanity; but that insanity was despair. In cases far more numerous despair does not drive a man to self-destruction, but to what is little better, to what often ends in self-destruction, and is itself a slow self-destruction—it drives him to excessive drinking. For this is often resorted to not from the love of drink, not from the love of the society of drunkards, but in order to throw off sorrow for a while, and to lull tormenting cares and anxieties to repose. Sometimes when despair does not show itself in such sad and

shocking forms, it causes a man to sit down in hopeless submission to what he deems his fate ; and there is no raising him up, no possibility of encouraging him to attempt anything ; he has lost all heart, all nerve, all courage ; he can see nothing but difficulty and failure if he were to make the attempt suggested ; and so he mopes and moans and sinks into a settled melancholy, and what was bad enough through misfortune becomes far worse through despair. Despair is also felt terribly sometimes by a man who has lived a wicked life, when he sees that his life is drawing to a close and has no hope,—feels himself to be a guilty creature, who must soon stand in the presence of his God to give an account of his deeds, and to be dealt with according to his deserts.

Despair, of course, arises from many causes, according to the nature of the thing despaired of. Ignorance, when a man knows that he is ignorant (which however is not always the case with ignorant men), may cause a man to despair of ever getting on in the world. He feels it hindering him, hampering him, making him unfit for this kind of occupation or for that ; if he had only been fairly educated what a fine scope he would have ; but he knows nothing ; his ignorance blocks the way to every path of progress and drives him to despair. Extreme poverty is also a great discouragement. Moderate poverty perhaps serves to stimulate hope ; but if a man be very poor, hardly able to support himself and his family, exposed to the rigour of hard times, willing to work but unable to get work to do, getting behind in his rent, compelled to pawn his clothes in order to obtain a morsel of bread, reduced to apply for parish relief, driven to the poorhouse as his last and only refuge ; it is hard for a man, in such circumstances, to keep up his heart, to hope against hope, to save himself from sinking into despair. And failure, especially repeated failure, has the same tendency. The man who was always the victim

of poverty is to be pitied; but more pitiable, perhaps, is the condition of the man who has come down in the world, and in whose heart there is the bitter remembrance of comfort, plenty, luxury. And he may think, and have only too much reason to think, that it is now too late for him to recover himself. He can't begin the world again with any prospect of success. He has lost heart; he is getting into years; the world is full of younger and stronger men, with whose energy he has no chance of competing. Let none be so heartless as to crow over the misfortunes of such a man, unless, indeed, he be a very great rogue who richly deserves his fate; but the best men may come down in the world; indeed the worst commonly continue, by some cunning and dishonest dodge, to keep themselves afloat, and set failure at defiance. Among the things that drive men to despair, none is more common than a broken character. With some men, indeed, character does not stand for much as a means of obtaining subsistence. A skilful workman is, to a great extent, independent of character,—that is, of moral character; and that is one reason why so many capital workmen are unsteady. Their character, the character that secures them their living, is in their fingers and thumbs, or in their superior knowledge of some branch of industry; and though, no doubt, it would be very much to their advantage in every way to have good moral character as well, still, unsteady as they are, unthrifty as they are, their skill has a good market value, and if there is work to be had, they can have it. But with many men, character, moral character, is everything, and if, unfortunately, this be lost, all is lost. A man who has once been discharged from a place of trust because he has proved untrustworthy, finds it very difficult to obtain similar employment, and is often incapable of any other sort of employment. His moral character, if it be not all his capital, is so large and

so important a part of it, that without it the remainder, his knowledge of business and aptitude for business, may be of very little service to him. But character is seldom utterly lost by some one mistake, or some one indiscretion, or even some one grievous fault. It is generally through bad habits that character gets altogether broken down, and bad habits, more than anything else, are the source of despair. For they get such a fearful hold upon a man, becoming stronger with every indulgence, and the more miserable they make their victim the more he clings to them. For instance, what is more hopeless than a habit of intemperance, when a man, even if he had the disposition, has not the power to resist temptation; when, however severely punished by his folly, he returns to it again and again? Perhaps he does not himself despair; perhaps he is always talking about reformation and promising to keep sober; perhaps he has more than once taken the pledge but broken it again. Whether he despairs or not, others have very little hope with regard to him.

If the maxim "never despair" is to be of much service to us, our first business is to avoid, as much as we can, the things that cause despair. That they cannot all be avoided is very true; but some of them, and those the things most fruitful of despair, can be avoided by most people. Ignorance, for example, which keeps men down in the world, and is the source of such a vast multitude of crimes; and, once a person has entered on a criminal career, there is so much reason for despair as almost to extinguish hope. We mourn over the low state of education amongst the people, and low, miserably and disgracefully low it is; but I cannot help believing that the people are themselves to blame for it. I cannot blame the State, I cannot blame the Church, I cannot blame the wealthy people of the land. It is within the power of almost all parents to send

their children to day schools for secular instruction, to Sunday schools for religious instruction ; and it certainly is within the power of all parents to set their children that example of right behaviour, apart from which instruction in schools is so apt to prove of little account. And if a lad's education has been utterly neglected, as he grows up to manhood there is no necessity for his remaining in ignorance ; there are schools and classes for him too, if he only choose to avail himself of them, instead of spending his spare time in idleness and in frequenting places of amusement. If people are ignorant it is because they choose to be ignorant ; and, in so far as ignorance is a cause of despair when a man has to enter upon the battle of life, it is a cause of despair which almost every man, before he arrives at man's estate, might have avoided if he would.

And so with that extreme poverty which so often drives men to despair, and in which they sit down hopeless and heartless. Such poverty might, in many cases, be avoided ; it is, in many cases, and I believe in most, the result of causes that are or that once were quite within the range of the pauperised man's control. Most of such men will tell you that, if they had their time to live over again, they would be in very different circumstances ; which is a confession that the despair which has overtaken them might have been escaped. And so, too, with that fruitful source of despair—failure, which is so effective in taking away all heart and energy. Make every allowance for unavoidable failure, say all that can be said for bad times, for casualties that could not be foreseen, for misplaced confidence, for a man's being the innocent victim of deception and fraud ; still the secret of many a coming down in the world is that "much would have more and lost all ;" the secret of many another failure is that the man has not diligently and carefully attended to his own business ; and the secret of many more

failures is that people will live beyond their means. And in so far as despair results from broken character, it is plainly a thing that every man may avoid if he will. Every man's character is in his own keeping, and, if he lose it, it is all to no purpose that he throws the blame upon others. Others may have acted badly enough in tempting him to do wrong, and making it difficult for him to do right, in setting him a bad example, in ridiculing his good principles, in undermining his good resolutions ; still he has himself to blame for giving way, and he has destroyed his character with his own hands.

First of all, then, if we would never despair, let us carefully and by all means in our power avoid the things that cause despair, and avoid them in good time. But perhaps I am addressing some who have not had the wisdom or the good fortune to avoid these things, and who are in a state or bordering upon a state of despair. Some one may have come here to-day with a very heavy heart, full of sorrow and anxiety and fear,—hopeless, or all but hopeless,—desirous of doing better things, but feeling utterly discouraged. My friend, I am afraid that I cannot promise you much. The heart knoweth its own bitterness. I can't tell where the shoe pinches you, and if I could, it is only too probable that I could not give you relief. However, if I can encourage you to look more at the bright side than at the dark, if I can persuade you that there is a bright side, or that there may be such a thing, I will. Cheer up! all is not lost yet. Men who have had more reason to despair than you have not given way to despair, have hoped on and worked on and struggled on, and fought their way out of darkness into light, out of want into plenty, out of misery into comfort, and, by God's grace, out of the very depths of guilt and wickedness into eminent goodness.

The man who is tempted to despair I would strongly recom-

mend to learn something of the lives of men who had great difficulties and disadvantages to contend with, and by their hopefulness, energy, and perseverance, conquered them all. You will find a rare list of such men in Dr. Smiles' excellent little work called "*Self Help*." I know few books that are more wholesome. It is full of food and physic for desponding and despairing men, especially for those whose despondency and despair arise from the depressed character of their worldly circumstances. In that book you will read of men whose early education had been utterly neglected, who never were at school in their lives; but who turned to with a will and educated themselves, under conditions of extreme difficulty and discouragement, and became great scholars. In that book you will read of poor lads who began the world without a friend and without a penny, who suffered much privation, to whom every door seemed shut; but who, not by any great gift of genius, and not by any sudden and unexpected turn of luck, but just by patient, plodding industry, by careful economy, by strict sobriety, and by much manly self-denial, contrived to rise, little by little, until they became prosperous merchants and bankers. In that book you may read of men who were extremely unfortunate, first in one thing and then in another; men whose lives seemed for a long time to be doomed to failure; but who, determined not to be discouraged, fought the battle over and over again, and at last were victorious. In that book, too, you will read of men who, not until they were well on in years, gave themselves in real earnest to work out some success; whose life was half gone before they began to live; but who made grand use of the little time that was left to them. In fact the story of much success in life is the story of success achieved under most discouraging circumstances, which would crush most men into

utter despair. My knowledge of such struggles and such victories is very limited ; there must be thousands upon thousands of cases that I never heard of ; but I know of so many and in such variety that, if I could have a conversation with any desponding and despairing man who hears me, I am pretty certain I could point him to some case similar to his own, only a great deal worse than his own,—some case of one with like difficulties, only greater and more numerous, who, in spite of all that was against him, triumphantly made his way. I do not speak this with a view to encouraging the foolish notion that any man can become great and famous if he will. The desire for greatness and fame I have no wish to stimulate ; but what I wish to do is just this—to show ignorant men and poor men, and unfortunate men, and men who have lost much time in indolence, and men who have, through one cause or another, missed chance after chance of making their way in life, to show such that they have no reason to despair, that they ought not to despair, that, instead of moping and moaning, and instead of taking to drink, as unhappily so many disappointed and desponding people do, they ought to rouse themselves, bestir themselves, take courage, and follow the example of those who have so nobly taught us the lesson “never despair.”

But perhaps there is some poor fellow here who is ready to say to me—“Sir, my despair arises from moral causes. You said very truly just now that, for some men, character is everything ; I am one of those men. And you also very truly said that character broken and lost through bad habits is, more than anything else, a cause of despair. That is my case. I am not an altogether ignorant man ; I have had an education good enough to fit me for the duties of a highly responsible situation, and I have held more than one such post. I have been pretty fairly

off. I stood high in the confidence of my employers ; I had very good prospects ; I moved in most respectable society ; my parents and my friends were people in comfortable circumstances. All was going on well. I married and settled in life, and I married a woman worthy of a far better man than myself. But, through some terrible infatuation, I began to be unsteady. I got into the company of men who were much given to what they called pleasure. I spent my evenings with them ; went with them to places of amusement ; adjourned thence, late at night, to taverns. I took to gambling, in various forms, cards, dice, billiards, and betting on races. I gave way gradually to the habit of drinking. I went to excesses of all kinds. I lost that regard for my wife and my children which ought to have kept me a faithful husband and an affectionate father. And all things went wrong. I lost my situation, I deserved to lose it ; I got another and I lost that, and I deserved to lose it. And now I am a beggar or next thing to it ; and although drink has been one main cause of my ruin, I am a slave to it still ; in fact, blame me as you will, I can't resist it ; and though I know that yielding to it must make bad worse, if worse can be, yet I fly to it for some temporary relief from the misery that is preying upon my mind. You see me the wreck of what I was ; a man self-broken down and self-destroyed ; without a friend, without a penny, without a character ; unable to make a living excepting through such occupation as, without a character for honesty and sobriety, cannot be obtained. Distrusted, abandoned, lost, I and my poor family, whom I have brought into all this misery, live, if living it may be called, in one squalid room, for which I can hardly pay the rent, though it is only two shillings a week. We have not a bed to lie upon. My little ones cry for bread, and I cannot give it them. I have *tried* manual labour, but I am of no use at that, for indeed I have

no strength left for it. I have degraded myself by asking help from those who knew me when I was better off. Sir, I have often been strongly tempted to make away with myself; again and again my hopeless misery has led me to meditate self-destruction. Can you do me any good with your fine maxim of 'never despair?'"

It is the honest truth; the picture is not overdrawn. I know more than one man whose history and condition it faithfully represents, and others whose sad story is substantially the same, though in some respects different. And if, within the narrow limits of my acquaintance, there are and have been many such, I must of course believe that this story of the lost and broken character, and of the misery and despair arising from it, is very common, and that, in many a case, there are features in it far worse than any that I have ventured to portray. And I confess that it is hard in such a case to apply the maxim "never despair" with much hope of its doing good. Yet, even in regard to such a case, I will venture to say a few words against despair, although despair has settled down upon the man's mind and heart to such an extent as to lead him to think of self-destruction. And, first of all, I would say—My poor fellow, don't do that. Come what will, don't listen to the fiend who counsels you to destroy yourself in order to escape from your miseries. Will it be a relief to rush unpardoned and unbidden into the presence of your Maker? Don't listen to the sentimental trash about the repose and quiet of the grave. Remember there is a hereafter. You *can't* destroy yourself; you can only put an end to your existence in this world; what you contemplate as self-destruction is only a change of condition, which, under the circumstances, would be very much for the worse. Don't add sin to sin and misery to misery. Even if you think that religion

cannot prove a future state, it is very certain that infidelity cannot disprove it. Don't be so reckless, don't be so profane, don't be so unmanly, as in that way to attempt an escape from your misery. It may seem very strange and very needless that I should make such remarks as these; but I know that suicide through despair, and temptations to suicide through despair, are unhappily common enough to justify far stronger and far more extensive remarks than these. And though it may be said that a man who has worked himself up or worked himself down to that dreadful state of mind is past remonstrating with, what I desire is to prevent a man's cherishing those thoughts which at last bring the mind into such a state; and therefore I say to my poor despairing brother—for God's sake don't allow yourself to think of that horrible resource. And another thing I would say is this—make a mighty effort to avoid seeking relief in drink. Drink has done you far too much mischief already. I grant that it may enable you, for a time, to forget your sorrows; but you know that it can do nothing to remove them, and that, if it be possible for them to be greater, drink will make them greater. If you can but conquer this propensity, to which I know despair gives a most awful strength, there is hope for you yet. That one victory, if only you achieve it, will in itself be a most hopeful sign, a token of other victories yet to come. First get your intellect clear and secure the use of your brains through strict sobriety. And then, whatever work you can get, take it and don't be ashamed of it. Recognise the stubborn fact that you have lost your former value, and that you must just take what society thinks you are worth, though it may be very little. And so you may climb as others have climbed before. You won't be the first who will have risen after such a fall. Others, quite as much broken down in character and

circumstances as yourself, have done what I counsel you to do. By God's help it is no impossibility. "God helps those who help themselves;" and can there be one in all the world whom He is more willing to help than the man who, ruined by folly and by sin, sincerely repenting of his infatuated course, desires and endeavours to get back into the ways of wisdom and of righteousness? So long as there is a God in heaven "Never despair."

One more instance of despair I will notice and then bring this address to a close. It is the despair of a man who is not so much in distress about his temporal circumstances as about his soul and its salvation. A distress not very often felt perhaps, would that it were more common, but a distress very real and sometimes very terrible, causing a man to cry out, with extreme anguish of mind,—“What must I do to be saved?” Some of you perhaps will laugh at this, and think it a foolish and morbid feeling. Well, John Bunyan was no fool, nor was he a poor morbid creature, apt to be melancholy, naturally prone to lowness of spirit. He was a man of great good sense, and he had a fine, sunny, cheerful soul as ever lived; but he felt the torment of despair arising from the sense of sin and the feeling that his sin was not forgiven. And so with thousands and tens of thousands more; so, in some measure, it ought to be with us all at some period of our lives; an earnestness and an anxiety about the soul; let no man think such feelings foolish.

And, happily, for despair of this sort, the antidote is not far to seek. At all events so I firmly believe. Christ is “the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” There is no man so guilty as that Christ cannot or will not save him, taking away his sins and giving him peace with God and eternal life. Most emphatically do I say, in regard to

this kind of mental trouble, "never despair." I do feel doubt, I do feel uncertainty, I do feel as though I might be mocking a poor troubled soul when, with reference to difficulty, and poverty, and failure in the world, I bid a man take heart and say "never despair;" but, with all confidence, I can say this when the heart's trouble is concerning the guilt and the burden of sin.

In this address it has been my desire to speak with tenderness, and kindness, and sympathy of all who, whether by their own fault or the fault of others, have fallen into the misfortunes, the troubles, the sorrows, and the sins that fill so many hearts with feelings of despair. I hope that I have said nothing hard, nothing unjust, nothing that would betoken an unfeeling disposition on my part. And if anything that I have said should give but one ray of light to some poor soul that is in darkness, any degree of comfort to a heart that has been crushed beneath the burden of its cares, any spark of courage to a spirit that has sunk into despondency, I shall be thankful. And, as a general rule, which it will be well for us all ever to observe, I would say—let us be diligent in the use of all the faculties with which we are endowed, let us faithfully pursue the path of duty, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left, and let us trust in the wisdom, the righteousness, and the love of God, and then we shall "never despair."

“THE BUSYBODY.”

I suppose there are not many assemblies of people, though not half as numerous as this, in which one might not with perfect truth use the words of St. Paul, and say—“Some . . . among you . . . are busybodies.” The busybody is rather a common character, to be met with amongst men and amongst women, amongst the rich and amongst the poor, amongst the young and amongst the old, in great towns and in little villages,—almost everywhere you may find the busybody. If, however, you think that I am going to utter a wholesale condemnation of busybodies, you are much mistaken, for I mean to do no such thing. All busybodies are not alike. There are some who are worthy of praise, of admiration, and of imitation; while there are others whose character and conduct make them disagreeable, and even odious. Just look at the word; you will see in it nothing bad, but much that is good. Take its opposite, an idlebody; this will show you, by contrast, that the word busybody has, or may have, and ought to have a very excellent meaning. How comes it to pass, then, that while the word itself is so very innocent and so capable of a good construction, it is almost always suggestive of a character anything but creditable? Why should you or I object to be considered busybodies? Why should we not rather be proud of such a title as busybodies—that is to say—not idlebodies? Our speech bewrayeth us. “By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou

shalt be condemned ;" and this word, it is to be feared, condemns us ; the meaning most commonly attached to it is an evidence that most people—that, at all events, very many people—take more pleasure in evil than in good, and that there is more of malice than of kindness in their hearts. But let us not give the word over to unqualified condemnation ; let us give it its full breadth of meaning ; let us see how good as well as how bad a character it may denote. Perhaps we shall find that it is a desirable thing to be a busybody ; that it is every man's duty to be a busybody ; that the best men in the world are amongst the busiest of busybodies ; and that those, whether men or women, who are not busybodies ought to be thoroughly ashamed of themselves. There are at least four sorts or classes of persons to whom this name is applicable, and of whom I intend to speak,—the *thrifty* busybody, the *useful* busybody, the *foolish* busybody, and the *mischievous* busybody. The first of these is to be commended, the second is to be admired, the third is to be despised, and the fourth, I think, ought by all just and lawful means to be put down, and if possible banished from society as an intolerable nuisance.

And, first, of the thrifty busybody. The thrifty busybody, if a man, is one who is diligent in his calling. We will hope that when a boy at school he was busy in learning whatever was taught him ; that when an apprentice lad he was busy in trying to master his trade, and becoming a thoroughly good workman ; at all events, now that he is a man, he is busy in his work when he has work, and busy in looking for work when he has it not,—when work is scarce, which unhappily is very often the case. If his employment be one that goes very much by fits and starts,—that, though active at one season of the year, at another offers him nothing to do,—he is all the more busy to "*make hay while the sun shines,*" and so to "*prepare for a rainy*

day." Whatever his employment is, he is very wary about wasting time. He loses no morning quarters; he never goes on the spree; he was never discharged, he never was found fault with for being off his work; he is no worshipper of Saint Monday; he never puts himself into such a condition on the Saturday night and the Sunday as to make the worship of Saint Monday either a pleasure or a necessity; and so he is never seen idly lounging about in the streets, or standing at the door of the gin-shop. He is a man who expects, and who if he can will have, a fair day's wages; but, believing that he ought to do as he would be done by, he will give a fair day's work, a downright honest day's work, such as no reasonable man could complain of, such indeed as every good judge of work would consider thoroughly up to the mark in quantity and quality. He is not a man who whines about hard work, nor one who envies the people that have nothing to do, that can afford to live in idleness. He would a great deal rather work than not. He believes that he was born to work, and that nobody has a right to live in the world who does nothing in it. As the saying is, "there's not an idle bone in his body." He turns his leisure hours to some good account also; not altogether abstaining from harmless and healthy amusement, yet not indulging in it much, and taking care never to spend either time or money in amusements, so called, that will injure him either in mind, body, or estate; but his spare time he occupies mainly in making up for the shortcomings of his early schooling; or whatever his early schooling might be, he still considers himself very imperfectly educated, feels his ignorance to be a great disadvantage, and therefore goes on adding to his stock of knowledge,—trying to make himself a well-informed man,—busy with his brain as, through the working hours, he has been busy with his hands. The

thrifty busybody, if a woman and a wife, thinks a great deal more of woman's duties than of woman's rights ; believes that, whatever her rights may be, the best way to secure them is to set herself in good earnest to her duties. She finds plenty of work in her house, and not only finds it but does it, and is always beforehand with it. Washing, mending, cooking, cleaning, seeing well to the comfort of her home, of her husband, of her children. She gives him no excuse for going to the public-house, making his own home far sweeter and more cheery than any public-house. Dirt is the great enemy that she hates and fears and fights against, and she finds herself more than a match for it. She is up betimes in the morning, gets her husband's breakfast ready for him, does not keep him waiting for his dinner, does not set him down to a dinner hardly fit to eat, and yet studies to be economical,—knowing that “wilful waste makes woeful want,” and feeling that money earned in the sweat of her husband's face ought to be very carefully spent. She does all she can to make her children clean and tidy ; she sees that they go to school ; she trains them up in good habits. She is no gossip or gadabout ; she feels that home is her place, and that to make home clean, cheerful, and happy, is her mission and her work.

Such are the thrifty busybodies, men and women. There are not too many busybodies of this sort,—there can't be too many. What a grand thing it would be if all working men and their wives were such busybodies. How seldom they would come to grief ; how few of them would end their days in the poorhouse, how little would they need to be dependent upon charity in any shape, how able they would be to stand the storm of hard times. Such busybodies seldom know what it is to be in want ; they generally have enough, if they have nothing to spare ; they never have to go to the pawnshop ; they are not likely to quarrel

and wrangle and use hard words, for as poverty never comes in at the door love does not often fly out at the window, and comfort has a great deal to do with the preservation of peace and good temper in the house,—for people are likely enough to be cross and peevish when they are half starved, and when things are all going wrong ; and if, in a nation, peace makes plenty, in the house, plenty goes a long way towards making peace. This is just what is wanted to set all our working people on their legs—that they should be busybodies in regard to thrift, busy in working, busy in saving, busy in making things go as far as possible, busy in attending to the bringing up their children in knowledge and in virtue. My friend, if you are the thrifty busybody, I congratulate you,—you are a sensible man,—you are likely to be a prosperous man, for “the hand of the diligent maketh rich ;” if you are not one of these thrifty busybodies, by all means try to become such a person, and you will find it a grand thing for yourself and your family to be in this sense of the word a busybody.

Well then, there is also the useful busybody. The thrifty busybody is useful, and very useful too ; he is useful to himself, he is useful to his family, he is useful to society, his example may lead others to adopt habits of diligence and economy ; and there are few people more useful in the world than those thrifty busybodies who keep the world a-going, who become great employers of labour, and, finding or making work for men, provide them with bread to eat. However selfish the thrifty busybody may be, there is happily this result from all his industry and activity—that he cannot be busy without making others busy, without at all events getting others work to do ; and so there may be men who, though altogether selfish and self-seeking, and as indifferent as possible to anything except their own interest, are nevertheless some of the most useful

men in the country. In fact, the thrifty busybody can hardly help being at the same time a useful busybody. Yet there is a usefulness which, although perhaps not greater in extent, is higher and nobler in character than the usefulness that almost of necessity accompanies thrift. When people say, "let everybody mind his own business," they say what is very right and very wise, and a great thing it would be if everybody did thoroughly well mind his own business; but if they mean more than these words express, if they mean that no one ought to pay any attention to other people's affairs and circumstances, then they mean what is very far from good, for this would be a very selfish course to pursue. This would be a very cold, hard, heartless world if the universal maxim were—let every man mind his own business, and think of and care for nothing else. And, after all, what is it to mind my own business?—It is part of my business, it is part of anyone's business, to do good to others. The good Samaritan minded his own business, when he pitied and helped the wounded wayfarer, much better than the priest and Levite minded their's when they passed by on the other side. It is certainly part of a man's business to love his neighbour as himself. Do you ask, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Yes, you are, when your brother cannot keep himself—when infirmity or misfortune in one form or another disables him and makes him dependent. However desirable it may be that every person should be above all need of sympathy and of help, every person is not in such a position. The poor, the sick, the blind, the ignorant, the widow, the orphan, need help; and if they are to have it, there must be some people who mind other business than their own, who make it their business to find out these sufferers, and administer to their wants. I say to *find them out*, for the best of them must be sought for, the

most deserving sufferers are not those who go about whining and begging; many of them would die before they would make their miseries known in that way; they suffer silently, they must be sought for. If there were none of these useful busybodies, the amount of suffering, far too great as it is, would be unspeakably greater. Every infirmary, hospital, and dispensary in the country has been built by busybodies, is kept up by busybodies, and would have to be shut up if it were not for busybodies. Every charity is indeed just so much work done by the useful busybody, who is not content with his or her own comfort, but has a heart to feel for and a hand to help others who are in discomfort and distress.

No character is nobler than that of the useful busybody, who, with heart, head, and hand set upon doing good, devotes himself or herself to the service of those who stand in need of pity and of help. I hope that I shall not be thought irreverent when I say that the greatest Person that ever lived in this world was, in this sense of the word, the very busiest of busybodies. He is well described as one "who went about doing good." He went about teaching the ignorant, pitying the guilty, relieving the suffering, comforting the sorrowful, saving the lost. Busiest and most useful of useful busybodies, His life is set before us all as our great example; our example in all respects, and certainly our example in compassionate, self-denying, ease-denying usefulness. And happily there are some, there are many, who do try to imitate Him by leading useful lives,—who give their time, their money, their strength to the relief and the removal of sorrow and of suffering. A busybody of this class was the great philanthropist John Howard, who busied himself all over the civilised world, and busied himself even to death, in obtaining for unfortunate prisoners something like rational, humane, and Christian treat-

ment. Another busybody of this class was Wilberforce, who busied himself in making the abolition of slavery the great object of his life. Another was John Wesley, who found that, in a great measure through the ignorance and idleness and general incapability of the ministers of religion, the people of England were little better than christened heathens, and who spent a long life in laborious and incessant efforts to make those christened heathens Christians. Certainly all truly Christian people must be busybodies of the useful sort ; they have no right to call themselves Christians unless they make it the business of their lives to imitate, in endeavours to do good, Him whose name they bear. And I believe that there never were, in this country at least, more of the useful class of busybodies than there are at the present time. I do not think that the rich can be accused of a careless indifference to the wants of the poor ; I do not think that the well-informed are all indifferent to the disadvantages under which the ignorant are laid. But, friends, let us all try to be useful busybodies ; there is not one of us who has not the opportunity or cannot make the opportunity of being useful. With all that I have said in commendation of the thrifty busybody, we cannot but accord him far more if, to his thriftiness for himself, he adds some usefulness to those who are not so well off as himself. Let us live not to ourselves alone. "To do good forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." Few things are more acceptable to him, or nobler to ourselves, than the activity, the toil, the self-denial of the useful busybody.

Well then, there is also, I am sorry to say, the foolish busybody. I shall say very little about him or about her ; I say *him* or *her*, for the foolish busybody is as likely to be a woman as a man, yet just as likely to be a man as a woman. Gossip is a noun masculine as well as feminine. The foolish busybody

is one who, for neither a good purpose nor a bad, but out of idle curiosity and a love of tattle, interferes with other people's matters ; and though perhaps he does no mischief, does no good either to himself or to anybody else. He is very wise in other people's affairs ; he has ears as long as those of an ass, and he listens to every tale, and then can't be easy until he has gone and told it. He is the sort of man of whom Solomon speaks when he says,—“Every fool will be meddling.” He knows everything about his neighbour ; he watches his neighbour's going out and his neighbour's coming in. He knows what his neighbour had for dinner to-day, and what he is going to have for dinner to-morrow, and whether it's paid for or not. He thinks that his neighbour is extravagant, fancies that he is not always sober, and believes that his neighbour and his neighbour's wife are not always on the best of terms. He wonders who the people half way down the street are, whence they came, how they make a living, and whether they can afford to live as they do. If there be a row in the street he is sure to go into it ; if a man and his wife quarrel, he is fool enough to interfere, and perhaps gets well thrashed by them both. As the proverb says, “He is always scolding his lips in other men's broth,” and perhaps finds the truth of another proverb, which says that “brabbling curs never want sore ears ;” and it is well if he do not illustrate the old saying that “a fool's tongue is long enough to cut his throat.” If the foolish busybody be a woman, she is full of all the tittle-tattle of the neighbourhood ; she is oftener in her neighbour's house than her own, and her own is consequently allowed to get into a state of dirt and discomfort. But I am reminded of a proverb which warns me not to say much on this subject, it is to this effect,—“Fools are wise in the affairs of women.” I don't profess to be wise in these affairs ; I am not wise in them ; but I just know this, that there

is such a person in society as the foolish female busybody ; at least so I am informed, and if I am wrongly informed, I most humbly apologise for my mistake. I quite believe, however, that there are fully as many men as women amongst the foolish busybodies.

Now the foolish busybody, whether man or woman, is a very contemptible person, a person scarcely important enough to be angry with, but a person whom it is just as well to avoid, because it is very hard for any one to be a foolish busybody without becoming, sometimes at least, a mischievous busybody. Precious as are the gifts of sight and hearing, it is sometimes good to be as blind as a bat and as deaf as a stone. There are many things in our neighbour's character and conduct and in our neighbour's house of which we ought to know nothing; and if we cannot but know them, we ought not to notice them, most certainly we ought not to call other people's attention to them. The foolish busybody should remember that "charity hideth a multitude of sins." It is a common saying that we should speak nothing but good of the dead ; it is quite as important to apply the same rule to the living.

But now I must speak about the mischievous busybody. It is in this sense that the word is commonly understood, and this is the character meant and condemned by the Apostle Paul, and by the Apostle Peter too, for they both take notice of it, and warn their readers against being such,—“Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.” The busybody, you see, is placed in very bad company,—he is put into the same list as the thief ; and the mischievous busybody is a thief of the worst description, because he steals from men and women, often his trusting friends, their good name and their happiness. *He is even put into the same list as the murderer ; and he is*

a murderer of friendship, a murderer of peace, a murderer of reputation, and malignant words spoken by the mischievous busybody have sometimes led to murder in the most literal sense of the word. The mischievous busybody is often but the foolish busybody in an aggravated form. The mischievous busybody is one who is great in Scandal. It gives him no satisfaction to hear of anything good in his neighbour ; indeed, if he hears anything of this sort, ten to one he says he does not believe it, or he will ascribe it to some bad motive, or under-rate it in some way. If he hears that his neighbour is getting on in the world, he will shake his head, look knowing and mysterious, and say he wishes that he had got on through honesty, and not through dishonesty. If he hears that his neighbour has done some generous deed, he will say that it would be better for him first to pay his debts. But he loves to hear of something wrong in his neighbour. The proverb says that "an ill tale never tines in the telling ;" and when the mischievous busybody tells an ill tale, which he is very certain to do, it comes out of his lips a far worse thing than it was when it entered his ears. If he has been told that his neighbour is five pounds in debt, he will make it ten, and say that the bailiffs are in the house ; if he has been told that his neighbour was at such a time rather the worse for liquor, he will go and say that the man was dead drunk, and that he is very often in that way. If he has been told that such a man has had words with his wife, he sets it about that they live like cat and dog, that he beats her black and blue every week of his life ; and he will make no bones of saying that *she* is no better than she should be. The mischievous busybody seldom sticks at the truth, for the truth, however bad, is not bad enough for him. He delights in dirt and nastiness, and always shews other men's faults through a great magnifying glass. He is a great tale-

bearer ; he likes nothing better than to go to a man and say, "Do you know what So-and-so says about you," if So-and-so has said something bad ; or perhaps he has not the courage to do that, and so he goes to a third party and tells his story under the pledge of confidence,—“Don't repeat what I say, because you know that might make mischief,” whereas the fellow has begun the mischief by telling it himself. He is “a whisperer, and separateth chief friends;” and many are the friendships, old friendships, happy friendships, much-valued friendships, that are turned into bitter enmity by such a busybody. People who whisper much are generally people to beware of ; what cannot be said, except in a whisper, in most cases, had better not be said at all.

Such is the mischievous busybody. Perhaps you have never seen him ; and you are a fortunate man if he has never given you any trouble ; but perhaps there is some one here who, to be honest, would say, I have done a little in that line myself. It is not everyone of us that can say, “I never heard with pleasure of other men's faults and failings, I never told about them, I never stirred up ill-will between man and man.” The thing may be done unintentionally, the mischievous busybody does not always mean to be mischievous ; there may be no malice in what he says and does, but the mischief springs up for all that. The word is spoken carelessly, it may be, but you can't recall it ; it is spoken, and it goes on its blasting way to the injury of some man's character and the destruction of some man's happiness. In the old law of Moses given to the people of Israel, there was this very wise and excellent statute,—“Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people.” Let us not be mischievous busybodies ourselves, and let us not encourage the trade in others ; for the listening to evil reports is all but as bad as the telling of them, and if there

were no listeners to such things there would be no tellers of such things. It is a matter of duty to put such people down by severely rebuking them, by refusing to allow them to talk scandal in our presence, and by adopting the opposite course, saying all the good we can truthfully say of every one.

Thus there are various kinds of busybodies, some to be approved and some to be condemned. The thrifty busybody is good, the useful busybody is better; the foolish busybody is bad, the mischievous busybody is worse. I do not say let us not be busybodies at all; I say, by all means let us be thrifty busybodies and useful busybodies, but have as little as possible to do with busybodies of the foolish or of the mischievous sort. Thrifty busybodies in regard to our own affairs, and useful busybodies in the affairs of others, such let us be. For thrifty busybodies we must be if we desire to prosper and to save ourselves and our families from want; and useful busybodies we must be if we do not mean to lead very selfish lives; useful busybodies we must be if we mean to fulfil the divine law,—“thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” and “all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.” In so far as industry and kindness make men and women busybodies, let us all be as busy as we can!



“FAIR PLAY.”

Of the many virtues in the practice of which Englishmen are apt to think that they excel all other nations on the face of the earth, Fair Play is one. I do not know what reason John Bull has for believing that in this respect he is better than his neighbours, but there is no doubt that such is his belief; “the English love of fair play” is one of his favourite phrases, and everything unfair he is in the habit of denouncing as “un-English.” And whatever may be the estimation in which fair play is held by men of other countries, I hope that, although the Englishman may have rather an exaggerated notion of his superior regard for this virtue, it is still true that the people of this country do love fair play, that they are determined to have it, and not unwilling to give it. We don’t like to see the strong oppress the weak, or the cunning take advantage of the simple; however bad we may think a man’s opinions to be, and whatever evil things may be laid to his charge, we feel it wrong, and shamefully wrong, that he should be condemned until he has had the chance of saying all that he can say in his own defence.

Yet, with all our love of fair play, we are sometimes tempted to withhold it; we do not always accord it fully and frankly; we are more intent upon having it than upon giving it. Almost every man, consciously or unconsciously, uses weights and measures that are in his own favour, when the thing to be

weighed and measured is fair play. For it is a great mistake to suppose that the only false weights and measures in the world are those used by knavish tradesmen. Many honest and honourable people, who have no desire to act unfairly, have what may be called mental weights and measures that are not according to the standard—weights and measures by which they weigh and measure their own merits and those of their neighbours; and pride, prejudice, and uncharitableness often make the estimate very incorrect. For myself, I must confess that, although I never in my life handled, for mercantile purposes, either a pair of scales or a foot-rule, I fear that I have used false weights and measures very freely, and that, in the sight of God, I may be quite as guilty as any poor rogue that ever was brought before the magistrates for having on his business premises illegal weights and measures. For if I have one weight for Liberalism and another for Conservatism, one measure for Protestantism and another for Romanism, or if I have a balance that always tells in favour of my own interests, what am I but a user of deceitful weights and measures? And I am not quite prepared to say that all the weights and measures by which I estimate opinions, characters, and interests, are so free from pride, from prejudice, from uncharitableness, and from other elements of disturbance and inequality, that, in every case, I give fair play.

Now, concerning fair play and the giving of fair play, I have to say one thing that may cause you some surprise; it is this—Let us give ourselves fair play. You may think that there is not, that there cannot be any need for such a piece of advice as this. You may say—there is no fear of a man's not giving himself fair play; every man is so intent upon his own interest, upon doing the best for himself, that he will be pretty sure to do all in his power to get fair play, if not

something more ; what is wanted is to teach and , to persuade men to give fair play to others, and to take care that they don't grasp at more than what is fair for themselves. Nevertheless, with all men's devotion to their own interest, I feel that it is important to urge this lesson, to insist upon this duty—give yourself fair play ; for there are very many people who don't do it. Indeed, if a man will but give himself fair play, he need not be much afraid of its being withheld from him by others ; and to give it to himself is the best means of securing its being given to him by others. Burns reminds us that "Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn." It is very true ; but man's inhumanity to man is chiefly man's inhumanity to himself.

I say, then, let every man give himself fair play. And in order to his doing this, let him give his body fair play. St. Paul says—"No man ever yet hated his own flesh." I am inclined to think that, if St. Paul could see what we see, he would at least admit that, if no man hates his own flesh, many men treat their poor bodies as though they had very little love for them. The body does not get fair play from those who, under the mistaken notion that the body is the seat and source of all moral evil, and that the starvation of the body is the salvation of the soul, reduce their strength by frequent and long fasting, and other austerities and severities. Wretchedly perverted notions of religion have induced men to inflict upon their bodies the most outrageous injuries. We say that "cleanliness is next to godliness ;" but there have been multitudes of men, and men calling themselves Christians, and believing themselves to be the best of all Christians, who were so far from putting such an estimate upon cleanliness that they considered it a great sin, and believed that he who abstained longest from the use of soap and water, who lived longest without a change of linen, who

became most filthy and was covered with the greatest amount of vermin, was the man of all others the fittest and the surest to go to heaven. "They sunk under the painful weight of crosses and chains; and their emaciated limbs were confined by collars, bracelets, gauntlets, and greaves of massy and rigid iron. All superfluous incumbrance of dress they contemptuously cast away; and some savage saints of both sexes have been admired, whose naked bodies were only covered by their long hair. They aspired to reduce themselves to the rude and miserable state in which the human brute is scarcely distinguished above his kindred animals; and the numerous sect of Anachorets derived their name from their humble practice of grazing in the fields of Mesopotamia with the common herd. The most perfect Hermits are supposed to have passed many days without food, many nights without sleep, and many years without speaking; and glorious was the *man* (I abuse that name) who contrived any cell, or seat, of a peculiar construction, which might expose him, in the most inconvenient posture, to the inclemency of the seasons."—*Gibbon's Decline and Fall*, iv, 319. All this we shudder at or laugh at, according to the mood we are in, but such unfair play to the body has not been confined to fanatics; all dirty people, all intemperate people, all people given to sensuality of any kind, are people who do not give fair play to their bodies. You can't call it fair play if the body is allowed to go day after day unwashed or but half washed, if it is clothed in filthy rags, if it does not receive wholesome and sufficient food, if it is gorged and crammed by a gluttonous appetite, if it is disordered and exposed to peril through intoxicating drink, if it is denied fresh air, if it is made to live in a dark, filthy, stifling habitation, or if its health is damaged and its energy destroyed through any lawless indulgence of the

passions. If we saw a man, through sheer wantonness and love of sport, smashing all the windows in his house,—breaking up the doors and the stairs, and burning them,—taking off half the roof, and making holes in all the ceilings and floors, so that the rain and the snow might have free access,—battering in the gable-end, and then sitting down among the ruins, what a mad-man we should believe the fellow to be ! How very soon we should have him made safe in a lunatic asylum ! But as a house is the abode of the body, so the body is the abode of the soul ; with this difference, that you can go to a new house if the old one is destroyed, but you can't get a new body for your soul to take to. And all that process of wild and mad destruction which I have supposed a lunatic, and none but a lunatic, capable of, in regard to a building of brick or of stone, is being performed day after day by multitudes of people, only the habitation they are smashing up is the habitation, the *one* habitation, of the soul. The body is apt enough to get foul play without our aid, and in spite of all our precautions. Accidents, illnesses, and privations that we cannot avoid will expose the body to no small measure of suffering and of danger. Therefore, I say, let us give it all the fair play we can, by keeping it, as the Church Catechism says, “in temperance, soberness, and chastity.” If we don't give it fair play it will bother us ; it will be like a horse under-fed or over-driven, or otherwise ill treated ; we shall not be able to get along with it, it will creep, and limp, and stumble, and fall ; and remember—there is no other to be obtained,—and if we don't give it fair play in its youth, it will be of little use that we attend to its wants as it gets older. Give it fair play, always give it fair play, by giving it food, air, and exercise in proper measure, by keeping it as clean as a new shilling, by taking care not to damage it through any intemperate indulgence ; and so it will serve us

well, giving us very little pain, affording us much enjoyment, being always ready for the work of life that we have to do.

Again I urge the duty of giving ourselves fair play, and I say—let us give our minds fair play. Our minds were never intended to live in a state of half-brutish ignorance ; they were intended to be well informed, and to be kept in healthy exercise. Your mind has not had fair play if you have not learned at least the rudiments of knowledge ; your mind has not had fair play if you are the victim of gross ignorance and superstition ; you are not giving your mind fair play if you don't read, or if, though you do read, your reading is chiefly reading of an uninforming and unimproving sort,—tales of lust and jealousy and adultery, and revenge and murder, and beastliness and crime of every description ; such stuff as that is just so much poison to the mind. Nor do we give the mind fair play if we give it nothing but amusement. I have been much struck with a definition of amusement which I find in an old dictionary, it is as follows :—"An idle or trifling employment to pass away time." Now, if we had any expectation of living to the age of the patriarchs who lived before the flood, we might perhaps have more time upon our hands than we should know what to do with, and a large portion of it might be spared for amusement ; but short and uncertain as life is, we can very ill afford for amusement more time than is really necessary to refresh us in body and mind, and make us more fit for work. The mind is like a piece of land, it may be naturally very fertile or very barren, and in most cases it is the latter rather than the former ; anyhow, it has to be cultivated, and labour and pains must be bestowed upon it to make it productive of anything save thorns and thistles. Give it, then, that fair play which a sensible, industrious, and enterprising farmer gives to his fields—so work upon it that it shall yield the

richest harvest it is capable of yielding. Innumerable facts testify that great and extraordinary powers of mind are not necessary in order to a man's attaining to respectable mental condition. Most people are born with such faculties as, by diligent and pains-taking culture, will make them well-informed persons. A proverb says "use legs and have legs," so we may say—use mind and have mind. The mind is often a very ill used creature, in many cases it never attains to half the strength and the stature which it ought to reach. If the body were as stunted in its growth as the mind often is, what poor little starvings most of us would be; dwarfs hardly three feet high, and nothing but skin and bones! I once saw on the walls of a town in the south of England an announcement to the effect that the smallest man in Great Britain would preach at such a time in such a chapel; and his little Reverence's height was given in inches, which amounted to thirty-four. Dr. Watts was a little man, and therefore naturally enough said that he must be measured by his soul, and that the mind is the standard of the man. But the smallest man in Great Britain! I wonder who he is when the measurement is taken by Dr. Watts' standard. Whatever your mind is, my friend, do at all events give it fair play; feed it well with the wholesome and abundant food of knowledge, exercise it well in thought, in meditation, and in converse with other minds, and so let it grow and enlarge itself to the uttermost of its capacity. When you have done your best for it, it will probably be nothing extraordinary, but you will have done your duty towards it, and depend upon it you will never have reason to repent of having given your mind fair play.

But further, we do not give ourselves fair play unless, with all fair play to the body and to the mind, there be fair play to the soul. We do not give our souls fair play if we forget that

we have souls, or if, not quite forgetting that, we don't care what condition they are in here, or what becomes of them hereafter. It is not fair play to the soul that it should be allowed to live in ignorance of God, that it should be allowed to debase itself in sin, that its interests should be neglected, and it should be left to take its poor chance in this world and in the world to come. To give your soul fair play is to give yourself, the best and most important part of yourself, fair play. And to give the soul fair play is to see to it, first of all that it be not lost, but saved, saved as only it can be saved, according to God's own way and will, through faith in Jesus Christ; and to see to it that through religious knowledge and culture it become ever more and more a Godlike soul, true, pure, just, honourable, peaceable, gentle, self-denying, generous, compassionate, forgiving. It is foul play, horribly foul play, to the soul if we deny it that holiness here, and that happiness hereafter, which God would have it possess and enjoy; and no man gives himself fair play who does not secure for his soul that great gift of eternal life, which God, through Christ, urges us all to accept.

Fair play says one—yes, but I must first see that I get fair play myself; and so say I, but to get fair play for yourself, it is above all things important that you give it to yourself, to your body, to your mind, to your soul. You may have reason to complain that this person or that person has dealt with you unfairly, very unfairly, unfairly to a most shameful extent; but just consider whether most of the unfair play you have endured has not been self-inflicted. I heard the other day of a man whose wages were generally from £5 to £9 a week, and who was known to have earned as much as £18 in one week. He met with an accident; he was carried home, if home the miserable den could be called, and there was not such a thing as a bed on which he could be laid. It is likely that he would

have complained bitterly of unfair treatment and considered himself a shamefully ill-used man if his wages had been lowered five per cent. ; but there he was, with an income of at least £400 a year, and not a bed whereon to rest his poor broken bones. There's many a case almost as bad as that. I think that I have reason to say to working men—my good fellows, do give yourselves fair play.

But now as to the fair play due from us to others. Our Saviour puts it before us very clearly in the well known words —“ All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.” Now that is fair play. You can't carry fair play further than that, and it is not fair play unless you carry it as far as that. Fair play, in fact, is doing as you would be done by.

There are certain home matters in which it is important that there should be fair play. It is not fair play to the wife if the husband loaf about in idleness when he might be at work, if he loses his work through carelessness and intemperance, if he spends nearly all his earnings on himself and his tavern companions, and if, because he finds his home cheerless and comfortless, he grumbles and quarrels, and treats his wife harshly and cruelly. Where is a man's manliness when he acts in such ways as these ? No, fair play requires that he shall do his most and best to put it into his wife's power to make home tidy, plentiful, and happy. On the other hand, many a man does not get fair play from his wife. It is only fair play that, if he is industrious and hard working, she should be thrifty and economical. Again, children have their right to fair play, and it should be given them. It is not fair play to them if they are allowed to live in filth and to become what are expressively called *gutter* children. It is not fair play to them if their parents set them a bad example in quarrelling and

fighting, and using bad language. It is not fair play to them if they are unreasonably scolded and beaten, until they only fear and hate those whom they ought to trust and to love. It is not fair play to them if they are not sent to school; if they are not as well educated as the means of their parents will allow; and if, through the lack of education, they grow up to be paupers and criminals. And since so many thousands and tens of thousands of children are dragged, I cannot say up, but down, and ever down in filth, and ignorance, and brutishness, and crime, it is high time to raise the cry of—fair play for these poor things. In consequence of the foul play that they receive great numbers of them die, and perhaps, as things are, it would be as well if half of those who survive were also to die, because they will live only to be miserable and vicious, and to be trained up in the nurture and admonition, not of the Lord, but of the devil. I have said that it is not fair play to children if they are not sent to school, but the fact is that, sent or not sent, to a school of some sort they do go, for the house they live in is a school, and the street they play in is a school, and the public-house, which they often so early frequent, and to which they are taken by their parents, is a school. They are all being educated, for to educate is to draw out, and it is education whether the things drawn out be good or bad, the best or the worst properties of human nature. It is not a question of education or no education, it is a question of a good education or a bad one, education in virtue or in vice. All are being trained—the most neglected little wretch that makes dirt pies in the gutter is being trained; his parents may neglect him, but the devil is on the look-out for him and will see to his education. All are being brought up, either in the way they should go or in the way they should not go; and in the latter case there is less of hope than in the

former of fear, that when they are old they will not depart from it. Happily, however, in the interest now felt in the question of education, the whole country is taking up the great question of fair play to the children whose parents cannot—or, as there is reason to believe in most instances, will not—give them fair play; and let us hope that no minor differences of opinion, no political prejudice, no theological bitterness will be allowed to retard the adoption of some measure calculated to save us from the reproach, the weakness, the misery, and the danger with which the present state of things is so heavily charged. But whatever may be attempted by the legislature, I cannot but feel very strongly, that it is of all things most important that the people themselves should be thoroughly impressed with the shameful and unnatural cruelty of allowing their poor children to grow up in ignorance. A compulsory measure may be a necessity, but if so, it is a disgraceful necessity, a necessity of which we ought to be utterly ashamed; for it shows that a considerable proportion of the people of this country, which boasts so much of its civilisation, are worse than beasts, are destitute of natural affection, in that they refuse their children what is so obviously their right, namely, such instruction as shall make them decent, intelligent, and useful members of society.

There is one person who has a right to fair play at the hands of every working man and that is—I was going to say his master, but I correct myself, I beg pardon of his Worship, of his Excellency, of his Royal Highness, of his Majesty the working man. I will not say his master, for he is too proud to acknowledge any one as his master, and so I will say his employer. Masters are an extinct class, numbered with the Mastodons and Ichthyosauri. The employers are not masters enough to feel that their shops or their businesses are their

own. Yet I hope that that Sovereign Personage, the British Workman, will condescend to give the poor wretched creature, his employer, fair play. The question of fair play, as between the employer and the employed, is a very old one, and a very hard one. For the most part it has been a rather angry controversy—a continued strife, struggle, and battle, in which, if much blood has not been shed, much very bad blood has been shown on both sides, each grumbling and snarling at the other, each determined to extort as much as possible from the other, and each party thinking itself very shamefully used by the other. I am not here in the interests of either party, but I am here to plead for fair play on both sides, and that fair play will be given if employer and employed just honestly consider what each would think reasonable were he in the other's place. Employer,—all things whatsoever you would that the employed should do to you, do you even so to them. Employed,—all things whatsoever you would that the employer should do to you, do you also to him. How soon, how happily all questions of work and wages would right themselves, if all men did but honestly and thoroughly accept Jesus Christ's great law of fair play.

And let there be fair play between buyer and seller. This does not always rule men's trading transactions. The buyer is often far behind in his payment of what is due, and has to be dunned and threatened by the seller, if the seller dare venture on such a course. What a thing it is for a man to be always wearing a coat that belongs not to him but to the tailor that made it. There are many such well-dressed thieves going about. To "owe no man anything"—that is the truest expression of fair play in regard to buying, to owe no man anything a moment longer than an honest conscience feels that the payment is due. As to the seller, let him also give fair play in

weight, in measure, in quality. An old proverb says—"the buyer needs a hundred eyes, the seller can do with one." It is an Italian proverb, but it only too well bears translation into English. For it really has come to this, that unless a man well knows from whom he buys, he can hardly go into a shop to purchase some things without the unpleasant thought that in all probability he will be swindled.

If it is your misfortune to have an enemy learn to give him fair play. Many a breach is widened, many a misunderstanding is aggravated, many a reconciliation is made hopeless, by ungenerous and unfair conduct on the part of those who for some reason or other fall out. Fair play towards the man with whom you have a quarrel, requires that you should frankly and cheerfully acknowledge whatever is good in him, and not suppose that because you and he are not on friendly terms he is a monster of wickedness. Fair play towards your adversary requires that you don't misrepresent him, and that you don't say behind his back what you would not venture to tell him to his face. How soon and how easily would quarrels be settled if we always observed Our Saviour's wise and manly rule,—"If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between him and thee alone." Above all, give your adversary fair play by honestly considering whether you are not yourself in some degree to be blamed, for there are usually faults on both sides.

Once more let us endeavour to give fair play to those from whom we differ on those great subjects Politics and Religion, with regard to which perfect harmony seems to be unattainable amongst men. Don't suppose that because a man differs from you in political or religious opinions he must be a bad fellow; don't saddle him with all the evil which you think his opinions calculated to produce upon the minds of those who

hold them. Unless you are a grossly ignorant person, you must know that in all political parties, and all religious sects, there are true, honourable, upright, sincere, and godly men, worthy of every man's respect. Above all, don't be so unfair as to condemn another man's opinions without knowing, and knowing well, what they are, and being convinced on reasonable grounds that they are incorrect. If there be anything in them which you cannot deny to be good, acknowledge it with all frankness and with pleasure ; and if we are more bent upon finding what is good than on exposing what is evil in any system, we shall generally find something good. If only there were in us all an abundance of the frank, hearty, cheerful spirit of fair play, then, though we should not all be converted to one way of thinking, we should think of each other a great deal more kindly and favourably than we do ; we should come nearer to each other in heart if not in mind. Our political and our religious differences would lose by far the greater part of the evil that is in them, each side and every side would have a fair chance of commanding the attention and obtaining the acceptance due to it, if once the spirit of fair play cleared our minds and hearts of all prejudice, malice, and uncharitableness.

"AND WHEN HE CAME TO HIMSELF"

Perhaps it has been your unhappiness, once or more than once, to see some friend, some very near and dear relation, so very ill, as to become delirious. His mind wandered, his talk was unconnected, he fancied things that had no existence excepting in his disordered imagination, his look was wild and unnatural; he did not know you, declared you were not the person you said you were, took you for some one else, supposed you were a total stranger, that you were a policeman sent to apprehend him, or an executioner who had come to put him to death; he spoke as if conversing with people long since dead; his father and his mother, his wife and children he failed to recognise, stared at them with a hideous stare, and angrily ordered them to begone out of his sight. You had to watch him, or see to it that he was watched, lest he should suddenly spring out of his bed and rush out of the house, or do something else that would be his death, and you said,—“Poor fellow, he is not himself.” And how glad you were when, after anxious days and nights, the raging fever subsided, and your friend knew you again, and his talk became rational and calm, and you said,—“Thank God, he has come to himself.”

There are cases also in which a temporary insanity—of a more formidable character and of longer continuance than the delirium of fever—attacks a man, and, as likely as not, a man of great intellectual powers. It may be that there is some

fatal taint of madness in his constitution ; it may be that he has over-tasked his brain ; but, be the cause what it may, the sad signs of mental derangement show themselves ; the wise man, for a time, becomes as a fool ; he who had instructed and charmed his fellow-men with the power and the beauty of his thoughts labbles incoherently ; the honoured instructor of thousands is unable to direct his own conduct, and for safety has to be placed in an asylum. But how blessed a change it is when, through rest and through wise and kind treatment, "he comes to himself" and is perfectly restored.

Some of you know, but perhaps some of you do not know whence I take the words which are the motto of this lecture—"And when he came to himself . . ." For the information, then, of such of you as may not recognise the source of this expressive saying, I must state that I take it from one of those wise and wonderful stories, called parables, which were spoken by our Saviour, and which are recorded in the Gospel. Yet it is not the story of a case such as either of those which I have described. It is not the story of a man who "came to himself" after the raging delirium of fever, nor is it the story of one who "came to himself" after an attack of what we generally understand by mental derangement. It is the story of a far more common case than either of those. It is the story of a young man whose father, a man well-to-do in the world, had been very kind to him, but who became impatient of parental restraint. There was some property, and it would seem a considerable property, to which he was entitled, which he demanded of his father, and which his father gave to him. And he took it, converted it, I suppose, into money, and went off into a far country. There he led a wild, reckless, harum-scarum life, and "wasted his substance in riotous living." The fool and his money were soon parted. He met with men and

women who helped him to spend it, and who, when it was all spent, abandoned him to his fate. Hard times came; there arose a mighty famine in the land, and he had to part with everything; he had not a shoe to his foot, he had scarcely a rag to his back, he was all but starved with hunger. He tried to get work, but the only work he could get was to go into the fields and feed swine, and "he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat." And then at last "he came to himself," or, as one of our old versions puts it, "he turned again into himself." All that time he had not been himself, he had been, as we say, beside himself, or rather he had been a long way from himself.

So then there are some who are not themselves, and yet are not delirious through fever nor deranged by what we call insanity. He who acts like the young man described in that parable is not himself, and there are very many such. The fact is we are not ourselves, we are beside ourselves, we act more or less like madmen, we labour under temporary insanity, but self-inflicted temporary insanity, every time we sin.

Of the vice of drunkenness, for example, it has been truly said that it turns a man out of himself and leaves a beast in his room. Yes, a beast, if not something worse than a beast,—a devil, or both beast and devil. The man is no longer in that staggering carcase, in that stupified brain. He cannot think clearly, he cannot see clearly, he cannot speak clearly, he cannot walk steadily, he cannot stand, but must either be held up or fall on the ground like a sack. His intellect for the time is gone; he jabbbers like an idiot. He may be so affected that the wildest of wild beasts is neither so quarrelsome nor so cruel. He will fell his wife to the ground with his fist or with the poker; he will knock her head on the floor; he will kick her with his hobnailed boots until he has kicked the life out of her.

He has been known to drag his little child out of bed and throw him down the stairs, or out of the window, or into the fire. A couple of hours ago this creature was a man intelligent, perhaps kind-hearted,—at all events reasonable and right-minded, capable of conducting himself decently and sensibly, and altogether incapable of acting as he acts now ; but now he is not a man, he is a dangerous and horrible compound of the brute and the demon. Perhaps he will come to himself again, but, for the time, himself he is not,—he is beside himself.

But this is true not of the drunkard alone. A man in a rage is not himself. The Apostle Paul, referring to his treatment of Christians before he became a Christian himself, speaks of his being “exceedingly mad against them.” His furious anger he regarded as so much madness “when he came to himself.” And we often connect madness with anger ; a man will indeed excuse his rage by saying of the person who provoked it—I was mad with him, or—he made me mad. See how our speech bewrays us. We don't exactly mean what we say when we thus speak of madness, but what we say is true, at all events has some truth in it. Anger, great anger, is madness, is a form of temporary insanity. While a man is excited by it he is deaf to reason, he is blind to the consequences of his conduct, he does things worthy only of a lunatic. In some cases he will commit acts of violence for which he may be transported or hung ; in less serious cases he will quarrel with his best friend ; or a word that he does not like so stirs his pride and his indignation that he will throw himself out of employment, and, as the old saying is, “cut off his nose to be avenged on his face.” Moderate anger a man may feel, and in some cases ought to feel ; cruelty and injustice will kindle anger in every right-hearted man ; but when this temper overpowers reason and causes a man to do things of which, in his calmer moments,

he will repent and be greatly ashamed, it is madness, and the man is not himself.

I do not know that the young man of whom we read in the story which furnishes us with our motto was either a drunkard or a man of ungovernable temper ; but he was a licentious spendthrift. He "wasted his substance with riotous living," he devoured his living with harlots, and on this account he was not himself—that is to say, he was insane, he was a fool. And there are many like him ; young fellows who start in life with the fairest and brightest prospects of success ; not without brains, not without knowledge, not without friends, not without money or the chance of making money. If they only remained true to themselves, if they only made a right use of their advantages, they would do well. Common sense points out as plainly as possible the path which it is their wisdom, their safety, and their happiness to pursue ; but it is a path of industry, of toil, of self-denial, of sobriety, of moderation in regard to all self-indulgence ; it is a path of sound morals, of sterling virtue ; and this does not accord to their humour, this they think is not the course by following which happiness is to be secured. It is too slow, too unexciting ; the pleasures that it promises are either too distant or not sufficiently intense ; might I not say—not sufficiently impure ? Despising the great object of life, which is to "fear God and keep His commandments," to "live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world," and to prepare for the world to come, they make sensual pleasure the great object of their pursuit. Milton represents the Devil as saying in his desperation—"Evil, be thou my good ;" but this is said not by the Devil alone ; it is said by many who have not the excuse of the Devil's despair ; it is said, in effect, by all who choose evil hoping to find good in it. And so they madly plunge into

vice, to the ruin of their health, their character, their circumstances ; to the distress of their friends, and, before long, to their own very bitter distress too. Idleness, and drink, and gambling, and bad companions, both men and women, soon tell a miserable tale. Not himself!—no, not himself—how common it is to see the man who is not himself. For one such in the lunatic asylums there are a hundred in the public-houses and in the streets. This poor wretch with a bloated face and a broken-down constitution,—this ragged-looking rascal whom no one respects, whom no one believes,—this is not the bright, cheery, hopeful lad we knew some few years ago ; we cannot recognise him in either the body, or the mind, or the circumstances of this beastly and ferocious blackguard. He whom we knew was healthy and strong ; this creature is diseased and feeble already with more than the feebleness of age. He whom we knew was clean and tidy ; this animal is so filthy that one dare hardly come within five yards of him. He whom we knew was well thought of by every one ; here is a man distrusted and despised by everybody who knows him. He whom we knew was blithe and happy ; what we now see before us is a picture of woe and despair. He whom we knew honoured his father and mother, and when he had become a man he set his heart upon a virtuous girl, and loved her with all his heart, and married her, and treated her with kindness, and was all that a man ought to be ; this fellow has brought down his father's gray hairs with sorrow to the grave, and allowed his mother to become chargeable to the parish ; he has proved a faithless and cruel husband, and an unnatural father. He whom we knew had the fear of God before his eyes, read his bible, learned and taught in the Sunday school, went steadily to church or chapel, and spent his Sundays in getting and in doing good ; but here is a man who for years has never been inside of a place of worship, and, though he

often mentions the name of God, it is only in abominable blasphemy. Alas! what changes sin works in men! Sickness works sad changes in some, misfortune works sad changes in others, time works sad changes in all; but neither sickness nor misfortune nor time works changes a thousandth part as sad as those that are wrought by sin. And, my friend, you are not yourself, your proper self, if sin has thus altered you from what you were, and prevented your becoming what you might have been and ought to have been. You are not yourself as God made you, and as God intended you should be; you are not yourself in the full development of the powers conferred upon you, and in the right use of the advantages with which you were favoured. Like the young man in the parable, you have been beside yourself, you have been living the life of an idiot and a madman all the time you have been living in sin.

But "he came to himself," did that young man in the parable. "He came to himself," as one who has been raging in the delirium of fever is restored to reason, or as one who has been made mad by drink or by rage is sobered and brought to his right mind. It is well when a man who has been living the insane life of sensuality or of sin in any form comes to himself; but such is not, in every case, the happy end of such a course. There are men who never come to themselves in this world; nothing short of hell brings them to themselves, and then it is too late,—too late so far as any useful purpose is concerned. And there are men who when brought to themselves can't bear it, and go beside themselves again. They "come to themselves" in some moment of reflection; but they find that they are such poor wrecks and remnants of themselves, that they are goaded into madness again. They "come to themselves;" but what is the self they come to? A broken down body, an enfeebled mind, a blasted character, a creature

in whom sin has made too much havoc to afford any hope of recovery. Such a one "comes to himself," and sees himself to be so frightful and so loathsome, that he is driven from himself again, and betakes himself again to such habits as will enable him to forget himself, and to banish himself from his thoughts. It is not well for a man to think very highly of himself; but the opposite extreme has its dangers too. When a man "coming to himself" out of a career of sin, brought to himself perhaps by sharp and terrible suffering, sees himself as he really is, sees what he has made of himself, sees what an utter fool he has been, and feels that now, his time wasted, his chances missed, his energies exhausted, his reputation gone, and the world full of men younger and stronger and better than himself,—there is no hope of recovering himself,—yes, there is danger in that awful self-revelation, danger of the man's relapsing, in sheer hopelessness, into the condition from which he has for a moment awakened rather than escaped. And so, if a man forgets himself and loses himself in sin, there are two great dangers; one is that he may never find himself again in this world, and the other that, if he should, he may be so horrified and terrified as to be deprived of all hope, and driven to the recklessness of despair. I think that if I met with a man who had just "come to himself," and felt this horror and despair in contemplating himself, I should like to say to him—My poor fellow, it is very true that you have wrought in yourself a woeful change, and I do not wonder if you loathe yourself. But there is One who does not loathe you; your Heavenly Father does not loathe you; He loathes your sins far, far more than you loathe them; but He does not loathe you; He will never loathe you. The worse you are the more He pities you. Of this rest assured, and it may be a help to you, in "coming to yourself," to save you from despair.

“And when he came to himself” Well, what then? First he thought of the plenty and comfort of his Father’s house—“How many hired servants of my Father’s have bread enough and to spare, while I perish with hunger?” Would that every poor fellow who has lost himself in sin, on “coming to himself,” considered the comfort and happiness of those who serve God and not the Devil. “Bread enough and to spare.”—I would not say that such is the portion of all God’s servants without exception; there are good people who are very poor; and yet I don’t think that many of them end their days or spend many of their days in the workhouse. They get helped on in some way; their Christian friends won’t allow them to starve; their character makes them worthy of help, makes them persons whom it is a pleasure and a privilege to help. David says—“I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.” I believe that, for the most part, the inhabitants of the poor-houses are the Devil’s worn-out and cast-off servants. The virtues of the Christian character are such as will, in most cases, preserve a man, even in hard times, from extreme want. The servant of God is a man honest, industrious, sober, and frugal; and such a man, though he may not have very much, will generally have bread enough, and something to spare. Exceptions there always will be, but there is nothing of which I am more thoroughly persuaded than this— that, as a rule, a fair amount of comfort in food and raiment, and provision for old age, is more likely, and far more likely, to be secured by a sober, righteous, and godly life than by any other sort of life; only it should be remembered that the sober, righteous, and godly life should have a fair chance, and it has not a fair chance if it be taken up when the best days of a man’s life are past and gone, when youth and early manhood have been spent in folly and carelessness and

vice. No ! give the sober, righteous, and godly life a fair chance from the beginning, and then see whether many men of that sort know what want is. There is no notion more untrue or more mischievous than this—that such a life is unfavourable to happiness. It is favourable to health, it is favourable to character, it is favourable to industry, it is favourable to thrift, it is favourable to peace and quietness of mind ;—what more would you have ? When a man who has lived in sin “comes to himself,” there are two things which, I believe, he will very clearly see ; one is—that his own life has been a wretched mistake, and the other—that the life of his godly neighbour, whom he has often laughed at, whom he has called a fool, whom he has despised for his steadiness, whom he has considered to be one who made himself miserable by his seriousness, that his life has not been a mistake, but a life of downright good sense and of very great comfort. There’s many a poor broken down and hard-up fellow who has so far “come to himself,” whom hunger and cold and rags and a miserable home have so far brought to himself, that, with all his heart and soul, he envies his neighbour who has found by happy experience that “Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” My friend, you have been careless and unsteady, and now are consequently very badly off ; would you not like to have a home as clean and tidy as your steady-going neighbour’s is ? Would you not like to have as well-filled a cupboard and as well-spread a table ? Would you not like to have as much laid by in the Savings’ Bank, or otherwise invested against a rainy day ?—What nonsense it is for you to talk about the superior happiness of your mode of life, when your mouth is watering for the substantial advantages that have crowned your neighbour’s endeavours to live soberly, righteously, and Godly !

"Live while you live, the Epicure will say,
 And take the pleasure of the present day ;
 Live while you live, the sacred preacher cries,
 And give to God each moment as it flies.
 Lord, in my view let both united be ;
 I live in pleasure when I live to thee."

When this poor youth of whom we read in the parable came to himself, he did more than think how well off his Father's hired servants were, contrasting his own miserable condition with their far happier lot. Such reflections would of themselves have done him very little good ; they might have only added to his misery, and driven him out of himself again. He did more than that, he said—"I will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son ; make me as one of thy hired servants.' And he arose and came to his Father." It is something for a man to "come to himself," to feel what a fool he has been, to see that in leading a life of carelessness and sin, he has been leading the life of a madman ; and the suffering and sorrow and shame that are the results of misconduct, have done a good thing for a man if they have thus brought him to himself ; but to "come to one's self" is not enough ; as I have said, to "come to one's self" may be so painful that a man will again rush into sin to escape from himself. How often, how very often, does a drunkard "come to himself," and find himself in such a deplorable and desperate condition, that he flies to drink in order to drown his intolerable reflections. And so with other vices ; an illness, or the death of a friend, or some trouble into which his vice has brought him, may bring a bad man to himself, make him thoughtful and penitent for a time ; but the impression soon wears off, he returns to his old ways, "and the last end of that man is worse than the first." No ! when a man "comes to himself," let him at once betake

himself to his Father, thankful that he has a Father to whom he can go. For this he has, whosoever the man is, and whatever has been his course of life, he has a Father. You say,—“I know, at least I believe I have a God, and indeed it is the thought of this that weighs most heavily upon my mind and fills me with fear. “Coming to myself,” I have come to a guilty conscience ; I have come to an anxious and most uneasy soul ; I have “come to myself” to learn that I have done wrong, and hardly anything but wrong, and that my God will not hold me guiltless.” Now it is one of the glories of the Gospel that it tells us that He who is our God is also our Father, and that He is not a hard and severe Father, as many fathers are, but One full of compassion and love, and always ready to forgive. That wretched youth, of whom the parable speaks, certainly deserved no favour ; but his father very gladly welcomed him, ran to meet him when he saw him coming, fell on his neck and kissed him, brought forth the best robe and put it on him, and made a great feast in celebration of the return of the ungrateful and disobedient and good-for-nothing son, who had long been as one lost and dead. And the Divine Author of the parable tells us this, that we, however far and however long we have wandered in folly and in sin, may rest assured that our Father will forgive and bless us. The prodigal having “come to himself” went to his father. It was this that saved him from again going beside himself in utter despair. “Coming to himself” will, of itself, do a man but little good, especially when he finds himself to be a poor weak creature, unable to withstand temptation, unable to keep a single good resolution ; when he finds that, though he is himself to-day, he may not be himself to-morrow. No, the “coming to himself” should be at once followed by going to his Heavenly Father in repentance and in trust. Then, my friend, and only

then, will you be safe; then, and only then, will there be a chance of your continuing to be yourself, and of your becoming a better self than you have been.

I wish that any word of mine might be the means of recalling to themselves men who are not themselves, who are in a state of moral insanity, seeking happiness in that which is destructive of happiness, and satisfaction in that which proves to be vanity and vexation of spirit. I wish that I could seize and turn to account one of those lucid intervals which sharp suffering sometimes causes, leading such men to serious reflection. But, really, when a man has gone morally beside himself, the case seems almost as hopeless as when the intellect has become deranged; in either case the appeal to reason appears to be all but in vain. Yes, it is well if a man who has gone astray "comes to himself;" but *will* he "come to himself," or will he "come to himself" in time to be saved from the ruin that goes on so rapidly through vicious indulgence? He may "come to himself" only to sink into despair, or he may never "come to himself" at all, for often, very often are Solomon's words verified—"The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall *remain* in the congregation of the dead." To "come to one's self" is well, but it is better never to go from one's self, never to be or to have been, in a moral sense, any more than in a mental sense, beside one's self; well to return, better never to have wandered. You may ask—"where is the man who never wandered, who never went astray, who has always been perfectly himself?" Well, I suppose there is no such man. There are many, would that there were more, who have always been themselves in that they never lost their senses, either wholly or partially, through intoxication; but there are very few who have not been beside themselves through a foolish and a sinful anger, and, probably, none who

nave not in some way, and to some extent, lost themselves in sinful thoughts, words and deeds. But, whatever these infirmities may have been, let every man form a true idea of what his *Self* should be; let him form that idea under the guidance of reason and conscience, and the revealed will of God. He will find that his *Self* ought to be a body and a soul both in the best condition that proper care and proper culture can secure. The true idea of a man's *Self* is this—"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created He him." But, since that idea was lost by man's sin, and by his ignorance of God through sin, God gave it another form in the person of his Son,—the perfect man, *the man* Christ Jesus; and we are *ourselves* in proportion as we are like Him. In so far as I find myself unlike Him I am not myself, I am not the *Self* that I ought to be; and we "come to ourselves" in coming nearer and nearer to conformity with His image. Be a Christian, a decided, thorough Christian, and you will be yourself.

“KEEP TO THE RIGHT.”

In this address I shall endeavour to answer three questions, viz,—What is the Right? Why should we keep to the Right? and How shall we keep to the Right?

What is the Right? “Keep to the Right” is, as you all know, a police notice, intended to direct foot-passengers so to walk in crowded streets as to avoid as much as possible jostling against each other. That distinction between the right hand and the left, which gives a decided preference to the former, is very ancient. Some thousands of years ago the patriarch Jacob called his youngest and favourite son Benjamin, a name which is supposed to mean the son of the right hand. All through the Bible we find that the right hand is the token of power and greatness and honour. It seems also to denote wisdom, for “a wise man’s heart is at his right hand, but a fool’s heart at his left.” It is also the sign of friendship, as in the expression,—“The right hand of fellowship.” Nor was this partiality for the right hand confined in ancient times to the Jews, we find it also amongst the Greeks and the Romans; with them the right hand was what was honourable, what was fortunate, and what was clever; from them we have our word dexterity, which is literally right-handedness. The poor left hand, though, as a work of creative wisdom, no whit inferior to the other, was *left* in ignominy. Generally, when

the left hand is mentioned in the Bible, it is mentioned somewhat to its discredit. Amongst the Greeks and the Romans the left hand was in like manner degraded, and if their praise of the right hand is preserved in the word *dexterous*, their dispraise of the left is also preserved in the word *sinister*. In what this preference of the one hand to the other, and this far greater use of the one hand than of the other originated, I cannot say; but, evidently, from a very early period, and throughout a large portion of mankind, such preference and such greater use have existed, and the left hand has been *left*; it has been called for only when the right hand required it to help it; it has been the right hand's humble and obedient servant, its patient drudge; it has been to the right hand what the striker is to the smith, what the hod-carrier is to the mason, what the clerk is to the parson; it has been the representative of unskilled labour. Almost all the finer work of the world has been done by the right hand; the left, naturally gifted with equal powers, has been neglected, perhaps not wisely, perhaps to great inconvenience and loss.

But I have not to speak of Right and Left, excepting in so far as Wrong, being opposed to Right, is to be *left*; *left* unlearned, *left* unloved, *left* undone, *left* untouched. In this sense there is much that ought to be left, and is not. If there be not many who are left-handed, there are very many who are left-hearted, verifying Solomon's words, "a fool's heart is at his left hand." Understanding by the left all that ought to be *left*, it means a great deal more than that side of the street or of the foot-walk which the police notice warns you not to take. The Left includes that, all that, which we ought to leave; the Right that, all that, to which we are directed—that, all that, which is ruled, ordered, and commanded for our observance. I have to speak of the Right—that which is ruled and ordered, as

opposed to the Wrong—that which is *wrung*, or twisted, or turned from what is ruled and ordered. Keep to the Right!

Well then, what is the Right? “I know my right hand from my left,” you say, “wherever I am, whatever I have to do in the darkest night as well as in the clearest sunshine. I know my right hand from my left, and I have known it ever since I was an infant; I suppose it was one of the very first pieces of knowledge I obtained. I am correct, always correct, and always instantly correct, when the question is, which is the right hand and which the left; in fact such a question is not a question for more than a moment, it is no sooner asked than answered. But I can’t so easily, so clearly, so quickly, so decidedly, and with such certainty determine between the Right and the Wrong.”

No, I don’t suppose you can; neither can I. In many cases the Right and the Wrong get confused in our minds. So much may often be said both for and against two opposite statements, or two opposite courses of conduct, that each sometimes appears right and each sometimes wrong. If the Right and the Wrong were as distinguishable as the Right and the Left, there would not be so many honest differences of opinion and conviction as we find amongst men, and amongst men equally intelligent, equally well informed, and equally desirous of being in the Right and doing it. There are many things which some have declared to be right and which others have declared to be wrong. Persecution, for example. I do not, I cannot think that men would fine, imprison, and burn their fellow-men for differing from them in religious belief unless they were very firmly persuaded that it was right, that it was their duty so to act. Yet most people, in this country at least, and, let us hope, in most other countries too throughout the civilized world, very firmly believe that persecution is utterly

and abominably wrong, and that however foolish, however false, and however mischievous a man's religious or irreligious notions may be, he ought on no account to be treated as a criminal for holding and expressing his opinions. War has been considered the noblest of all occupations, just the right occupation for kings. Some partiality for war still exists, but the conviction is becoming more and more general that war is under almost all circumstances wrong, at the best a dreadful necessity, never a thing to be gloried in. And Slavery, too, has been upheld as perfectly lawful and right. Indeed, until Christianity proclaimed to the world the universal brotherhood of men, it seems to have been hardly suspected that slavery was wrongful at all; and although Christianity has been the great Emancipator of Slaves, there always have been, and there still are, men professing the Christian name who are quite prepared to apologize for, to justify, and to practice the horrible enormity of slavery. Keep to the Right! But what is the Right? What, for instance, is the Right in politics? Toryism or Whiggism, Conservatism or Liberalism, or Liberal-Conservatism. What is the Right in religion? Roman Catholicism or Protestantism, Ritualism or Rationalism, Calvinism or Arminianism, Prelacy or Presbyterianism, Conformity or Non-Conformity, Independency, Methodism, or Swedenborgianism. What is the Right in morals? for here also men think very differently. What one thinks right another thinks wrong, and what one thinks, if not quite right, yet hardly culpable, another thinks very wrong indeed. Thus one man with perfect sincerity believes that he may drink ale, wine, or spirits, provided he do so within the bounds of sobriety, and another, just as sincere, maintains that it is a sin to touch anything of the sort. It is not an easy matter to determine what the Right is, since upon so many questions, and exceedingly important questions, such great

differences exist among well informed and honestly minded people.

Well, I would say with St. Paul—"Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." On many matters it certainly is difficult, perhaps impossible, to determine what the Right is; and in regard to such matters let us not be too certain that we are right, and that those who differ from us are wrong; let us cultivate a spirit of candour, of humility, and of charity. Yet in regard to most things related to character and conduct, I do not think it very hard to arrive at conclusions by which we may safely abide in the conviction that they are not wrong, but right. I cannot say as much in praise of conscience as some have said. I cannot say with Byron, for example, "Man's conscience is the oracle of God." This oracle of God has given strange answers, not at all god-like answers, to some questions that have been put to it. It has often been a great deal more like the oracle of the Devil. Paul obeyed the voice of his conscience when he "breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord;" and probably there have not been many persecutors who could not, with perfect honesty, plead strong convictions of conscience in justification of the most inhuman of their proceedings. Those proceedings may have been dictated in some measure by anger, in some measure by cruelty; but conscience probably had as much to do with them as anger or cruelty, perhaps a great deal more. A little while ago we heard of some people who very properly called themselves "a peculiar people," and one of their peculiarities was their belief in the sinfulness of having recourse to medical advice and assistance under any circumstances; and the consequence was that one or more of them died through the lack of such advice and assistance. But there is no reason to doubt that the "peculiar people" were perfectly conscientious. And I

think that I could mention cases of men who have treated their wives and their children very harshly, very cruelly, not to say very barbarously, and yet have given most unquestionable evidence of their perfect sincerity, of their unflinching adherence to the dictates of conscience. No ! conscience is not always the oracle of God : that "still small voice within" may be the voice of Satan. Conscience may be blinded, conscience may be seared, conscience may be trained to put darkness for light and light for darkness, until there is in the mind an entire reversal of Right and Wrong. A man without a conscience, if such a man there be, is certainly a very dreadful creature, a wild beast in the form of a man ; but a man with a blinded conscience, with a seared conscience, or with a conscience that has been trained in moral misconceptions, is perhaps a still more dreadful creature ; and there is no unjust or cruel deed which he may not be convinced is right, and if he be convinced that it is right, he will do it if he can.

And yet, with all these mistakes and failures to which conscience is unhappily liable, it would be very foolish to discard conscience, and say that it is no guide in the discrimination of the Right from the Wrong. I am not going to shut my eyes, nor in all cases to distrust my eyes, because they tell me falsely that a stick, which I know to be straight, becomes crooked when one end of it is dipped in a pond. I am not going to say that my ears are of no use to me because sometimes they cause me to mistake the rumble of a waggon for a peal of thunder ; and I don't intend to part with my watch because it has sometimes gone wrong and deceived me. In most cases my eyes, my ears, and my watch give me correct and not incorrect information ; and so does conscience, my conscience, your consciences ; I would not say every man's conscience, but the consciences of most men. There are certain broad and

well-marked distinctions which the consciences of civilized men do draw between the Right and Wrong. Ten thousand things may have conduced to bring the conscience to this state of accuracy in its moral judgments—the law of the land, the customs of society, the force of example, the influence of good, early training ; but, anyhow, the conscience has been brought into such a condition as fits it to be, not always, but in most circumstances, a guide that we can safely follow. There may be some to whom conscience says scarcely anything, but what does it say to you and me? We hear its voice. There is no testimony of eyes or ears more certain, more conclusive, more convincing. It says, if not to every man in the world, yet to us,—it is right to be truthful, and wrong to tell lies ; it is right to be honest, and wrong to steal ; it is right to be sincere, and wrong to play the hypocrite ; it is right to be sober, and wrong to get drunk ; it is right to be chaste, and wrong to be licentious ; it is right to be industrious, and wrong to be idle ; it is right to be saving, and wrong to be extravagant ; it is right to honour and to love our wives, and wrong to treat them with cruelty or neglect ; it is right to do the best we can for our children, and wrong to leave them uncared for and untaught ; it is right to be patient, and wrong to be wrathful ; it is right to be good-tempered, and wrong to be peevish ; it is right to be generous, and wrong to be selfish ; it is right to pay our way in the world, and wrong to be continually running into debt ; it is right to be reverential, and wrong to be profane ; it is right to be thankful to God, and wrong to be ungrateful to Him ; it is right in all things to obey Him, and wrong in anything to disobey Him. Thus far, at least, conscience goes in telling you and me how to distinguish between the Right and the Wrong ; and, if it go thus far, it goes a very long way, and leaves comparatively few things.

and very few important things, undetermined as to their right-ful or wrongful character.

Still I quite admit that conscience is apt to be mistaken, and that there are some things, and important things, in regard to which conscience of itself tells us little or nothing. But I believe that all the light that conscience requires, all the light that it has not in itself, but must have supplied to it, is supplied by that Book which has been given to be "a lamp to our feet and a light to our path." The service which the Bible has done in enlightening conscience is inestimable; it makes all the difference between heathenism and Christian civilization. Men may cavil as they will about inspiration, and object as they will to this and to that which they find in the Bible, and ridicule as they will those who thankfully accept the Bible as the message, the great collection of messages, sent to them by their Heavenly Father for their guidance in this life and to the life to come; one thing is certain, that to this Book we are all under obligation greater than we can express; the very men who disbelieve it, hate it, or laugh it to scorn, owe to it their freedom and almost all the right ideas of duty they possess. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word." "He hath showed thee, Oh man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God?"

Exercise your common sense,—use your conscience, which is common sense, applied to questions of duty,—and make the Bible your frequent, your daily study, and then you will be very well able, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, to determine between the Right and the Wrong; and if anything more be needed to enable you to know what the Right is and what the Wrong, I would say—do the Right so far as you know it. It is wrongdoing more than anything else that leads to confusion in

men's minds as to Right and Wrong. They say that some men tell lying stories so often that at last they come to believe that they are true. It is very certain that a man may so persist in doing wrong as to believe it to be right, or, at all events, to lose all sense of its being wrong. The first time a man gets drunk, it is most likely that, on becoming sober, he is very much ashamed; after he has been drunk twenty times, the probability is that he will not have the slightest idea of having done anything to be ashamed of. Most men who are very doubtful in regard to what is Right and what is Wrong, are men who have never steadily pursued the Right so far as they knew it. Do the Right, so far as you know it, and that is the way to get to know it better; for "the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

Well then, if we know the Right,—and although unhappily there are many people even in this civilized and Christian country who know very little of it, we do know a great deal about it, and can, in most practical affairs, distinguish it from its opposite the Wrong—if we know the Right, the next question is—Why should we keep to it? This question, I think, need not detain us long; indeed the fact that Right is Right ought to settle the matter; and once a man is thoroughly and on good grounds convinced that such or such a course is right, he had better ask no further question; he had better not begin to haggle with his conscience in seeking some excuse or other for not at once doing what he knows to be the right thing.

I do not deny, however, that there is pleasure, and intense pleasure of a sort, in departing from the Right,—in leaving the Right, and so converting Right into Left. All the pleasures of sin are the result of not keeping to the Right. No doubt some can find pleasure in idleness; the utter waste of time in frivolous amusements, also, has its pleasures for some people; if

men did not find pleasure in drinking to excess, I suppose they would not do it. And so with regard to licentiousness in every form and in every degree ; the Right is left for the sake of the pleasure the Wrong can give. And keeping to the Right does require a good deal of self-denying effort, which, unless one accustoms himself to it early, is anything but agreeable, at all events for a time. Keeping to the Right may even cost a man his life ; there's not much fear of its being so expensive to us ; but it has cost many men their lives ; thousands of patriots and of Christians have died rather than not keep to the Right. Nor is it always certain that a man will get on in the world any the better by keeping to the Right. The Wrong has done splendidly for some men in regard to worldly success. It has been so in all ages. David saw such men in his time, and said—"Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world ; they increase in riches." And there are such men now ; clever rascals, who get on by roguery better than most men do by honesty. And so a man may be inclined to ask—"What, after all, is the use of keeping to the Right ? Shall we be any the happier ? Shall we be any the richer ? Shall we be thought of any the better ? We see many men who, by keeping to Wrong, have risen to wealth, distinction, success. Will the Right do as much for a man as the Wrong seems to do ?"

Now, in regard to worldly success, keeping to the Wrong does not always secure it, does not in any large proportion of cases secure it. For one whom the Wrong leads to wealth and prosperity, there are hundreds whom it leads to beggary and ruin ; whereas, as the proverb says, "Right wrongs no man," and certainly wrongs not the man who keeps to it and does it. A man must be strangely and stupidly ignorant if he do not know that going to the Wrong generally ends, and soon ends, in what people mean by "going to the bad." Why are

those hang-dog looking scoundrels in prison? Because they would not "keep to the Right." Why are those thousands and tens of thousands of penniless wretches in the poor-houses, and why are we obliged to keep them out of our hard-earned wages? Because they would not "keep to the Right." How is it that so many whimpering lying ragamuffins infest the streets and come cringing and crawling to our doors? Because they would not "keep to the Right." Think not only of the successes, but also of the failures, that have resulted from keeping to the Wrong. And don't suppose that keeping to the Right never leads a man to success. So far as worldly circumstances are concerned, the difference between keeping to the Right and going to the Wrong is this,—that the former raises many and depresses none; while the latter elevates a few, generally but for a short time, and sinks many, sinks almost all who take to it, in want and misery and shame.

Surely what we every day see befalling those who are so misguided as to take to the Wrong ought of itself to warn us to keep to the Right. No great misfortune is likely to befall you if, walking along the streets, you choose to violate the rule of the road for foot-passengers, and prefer the rule for horses and asses, which is to keep to the Left; but if the result of not keeping to the Right were the imminent danger of being run-over and maimed and killed, most people would be very careful to do as they are advised and requested. Now the result of not keeping to the Right in morals is the danger and the certainty of great injury, of some sort, to mind, body, or estate. Whereas, on the other hand, what advantages there are in keeping to the Right,—always keeping to the Right! Health, comfort, plenty, a quiet mind, a good conscience, a character worth having and worth keeping, the respect and the confidence of your fellow-men, the approval and favour of your

God ! These, surely, are things of some value ; and they are to be had through keeping to the Right. I will state the case in this form :—Did you ever know a man who repented of keeping to the Right ? You may have known many who were tempted to forsake the Right, because the Wrong promised them greater enjoyment ; but did you ever know a man who, deliberately, in the exercise of his calm judgment, repented of having kept to the Right,—that is to say, was sorry that he had been industrious, that he had been sober, that he had been saving, that he had been truthful, that he had been honest, that he had been pure, that he had been gentle, that he had been self-denying, that he had been God-fearing ? Such a penitent, I think, is very rarely to be met with. You might almost as reasonably expect to find a man bitterly regretting that he had good eyesight and strong limbs. But did you never meet with a man who repented of having left the Right and taken to the Wrong ? My friends, this poor world rings and resounds with the lamentations of such men, as, in the bitterness of their souls, they curse their madness, and vainly regret what through taking to the Wrong they have lost.

There are reasons enough, I am sure, why a man should ever faithfully keep to the Right ; always supposing that he has studied to know what the Right is, and is well assured that he has it. But there is one question more which at the beginning of this lecture I proposed to consider ; and that is—How shall we keep to the Right ? The world is full of temptations, and our hearts contain many strong inclinations to depart from the Right. The police notice “Keep to the Right,” would not be much regarded by any of us if we saw that, by going to the left, we could pick up half-crowns and sovereigns and bank notes, left lying in the street. And that is the sort of disadvantage under which the rule “keep to the

Right" labours when we take it in a moral and a religious sense,—as the order, not of the police, but of the Universe, and of the Maker of the Universe. We see, or think we see, and many people are sure they see, that, by departing from the Right, men can obtain some gratification from which keeping to the Right debars them ; and the temptation is too strong for them ; and they go, perhaps most honestly intending soon to return, but we look for their return in vain ; for, once they take to the Wrong, keeping to the Wrong becomes their rule until it becomes their ruin.

How shall we keep to the Right? Do you honestly wish to keep to it? If so, then I think that the sad and shocking consequences of going to the Wrong ought to have some power over you to keep you to the Right. Consider those consequences. There is no difficulty in discovering them ; you may see them,—rather I should say you do see them, and can't help seeing them, every day. Perhaps you have seen them in some friend of yours, in some brother of yours ; perhaps you have seen them and know them, to some extent, in yourself, and in your own home and family. And may I not with equal confidence appeal to the happy consequences of keeping to the Right as fit to encourage and to help you in adopting this course of conduct? But, apart from all consequences, whether of going to the Wrong or keeping to the Right, let us remember that it is the will of God that we keep to the Right ; and let this thought have its due and proper influence upon our minds. And if, feeling our weakness, as often we shall do when strong temptations assail us, we are fain to confess that though "we would do good evil is present with us," let us not fail to ask for help from above. In a world like this, so full of evil, and with hearts like ours, so prone to evil,—the best, the only safeguard and guarantee for our keeping to the Right is the

frequent and earnest offering of the prayer—"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." And then the more we keep to the Right the easier keeping to it will become; for "use is second nature;" and we shall learn to honour and to love the Right, and to regard the Wrong with ever increasing abhorrence and contempt, until, in spite of every temptation and every discouragement, we shall, with all our hearts and souls, rejoice in keeping to the Right.

"BE MERRY AND WISE."

Well may Soloman say that "a merry heart doeth good *like* a medicine." Even in a literal sense this is true, for there is many a bodily ailment recovery from which is hindered by a depressed and gloomy disposition, but hastened by a disposition that is cheerful and hopeful; and when the trouble is not physical disease, but anxiety of mind, there is no medicine to be compared with a natural buoyancy of spirit. It will quickly heal heart wounds and heart bruises, which in the case of a man otherwise minded would never be healed at all. No need has the man of a cheerful disposition to fly to that dangerous and desperate resource—strong drink—to find relief from trouble. It is true that wine maketh glad the heart of man, but far, far better than any such stimulant is the heart which, in its own independent way, has an unfailing source of gladness in itself, and can find in itself heart's ease for all heart's trouble. A merry heart doeth good, not like a dangerous and deceitful stimulant, but like a wholesome medicine. The wise man also says—"He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast." He may be a very poor man,—perhaps nothing that a lover of good living would call a feast was ever spread upon his table,—perhaps the best things that ever were seen upon his table were such as men, whose god is their belly, would turn from with disdain and with loathing.

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To the epicure such living would be worse than a continual fast, worse than a severe keeping of Lent all the year round, a year of Ash-Wednesdays and Good-Fridays, observed after the strictest and most abstemious fashion. Yet the man having a merry heart has a continual feast, enjoys existence, enjoys even that poor fare of his a great deal more than many can enjoy most sumptuous repasts. For it is very pleasant and encouraging to observe how independent of outward circumstances the merry heart can be. The poor,—I would not say the extremely poor, but thousands and millions who are commonly called poor, and in comparison with many others are very poor,—have quite as much happiness as the richest of the rich; the hard working man has probably far more happiness than the man who has nothing to do. In regard to happiness far more depends upon what we are than upon what we have. We have heard of “jolly beggars,”—I don’t think any one ever heard of jolly millionaires. We have no such phrase; indeed one of the names most commonly applied to a monied man is “miser,” a miserable man. “A man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth;” and many a rich man, if of a gloomy and desponding spirit, would make an excellent bargain, if, at the cost of all his wealth, he could but purchase the merry heart of some poor peasant boy, who never saw a sovereign, and never owned half-a-crown.

It is well to have a cheerful disposition, or, as Solomon calls it, “a merry heart.” It is well for ourselves, since such a heart “doeth good like a medicine,” and is to its fortunate possessor a continual feast. It is medicine for both mind and body, and of all feasts it is the cheapest, for it costs nothing, and the wholesomest, for it never produces headache or indigestion. But not for ourselves alone is the merry heart good. It is good for those with whom we live. A cheerful

man spreads cheerfulness around him, promotes cordiality, kindness, and happiness wherever he goes; his looks and his words are a wonderful help to those who are depressed and in trouble. More than half the miseries of men's homes arise from the absence of a cheerful spirit. What a difference it makes, what sunshine fills the house, when there is in it even one right merry heart, such as Solomon speaks of. And this cheerfulness of spirit is a good thing when we consider it in a religious aspect. Habitual cheerfulness of spirit is one form of thankfulness to God; whereas the man of a discontented and grumbling disposition may be said to be continually reproaching his Maker, and finding fault with the order of Providence. There is wealth, there is happiness, there is even godliness in a cheerful spirit. And those who think that godliness is opposed to such a disposition are very greatly mistaken. It is true that a man may be cheerful, may be merry, without much thought of religion, but it is very hard to believe in the piety of a morose, sullen, gloomy soul; for a man of such a soul does not live in that spirit of thankfulness to God which is one of the chief elements of true religion.

But our motto is—"Be merry and wise." Cheerfulness, when it rises into merriment, is apt to become foolish, and very foolish, so foolish as to be utterly bad. The merry heart that ought to do good like a medicine, and be a continual feast, if not kept within the bounds of prudence and temperance, will do evil like a poison, and be not a continual feast, but a cause of want and wretchedness. So common and so strong is the tendency to carry mirth to a foolish and mischievous extreme, that even the word merry, so good and pure in itself, has become, to some extent, discredited and disgraced. It has got associated with intemperance. Among the ways men have of conveying the idea that a man is drunk, without exactly

saying so, this is one—to say that he is merry. Even in the Bible the word merry occurs several times in connection with pretty extensive drinking, and in one case it is expressly stated that a certain man's heart “was merry within him because he was very drunken.” Mr. Mundella, M. P., in a speech upon Education, which he delivered a short time since, told an anecdote of a man who, on being lectured for his intemperance, and assured that he could work well enough without drink, work better without it than with it, replied—“Yes, I know that ; of course we can work without it, everybody can work without it, but, Master, we can't play without it.” That unfortunately is the notion that many men, at all events many Englishmen, have got into their stupid heads—that they can't play without drink ; that they can't play without getting drunk, or, at least, going to the very borders of drunkenness. As a rule, if a working-man's club does not succeed, it is because an unlimited supply of beer is not allowed in it. Newspapers may be supplied, and books, and a bagatelle-board, and a billiard-table, and chess, and cards, and a smoking-room ; all these avail the British workman nothing in the absence of strong drink. In many cases even a singing-saloon would be a failure, without a refreshment-bar that should supply something stronger than tea, or coffee, or lemonade. In vain the minstrels would blacken their faces, cut their capers, and sing their most comic or most sentimental songs, if somewhere about the concern strong drink were not to be had. Some good people think that the gin-palace may be supplanted by a place which shall be made as attractive as that favourite resort ; and that, if they prepare a house that shall blaze with equal splendour, the working-people will throng to it, although the beverages provided are only coffee and tea and milk, and other unintoxicating liquors. I cannot but feel afraid that such well-meant efforts will also

fail of attracting the masses of the people. Most of those who go to the gin-palace go, not for the sake of the gas-light, not for the sake of gazing on the decorations—they go for the gin and other intoxicating drinks; and they would rather go to the most comfortless cellar, or to the filthiest pigstye, for a glass of the vilest whiskey, than to the most comfortable and splendid temperance establishment for a cup of the best coffee that ever was made. Thus strongly has the partaking, and the free partaking, of intoxicating drink become united with the English working-man's idea of refreshment, of enjoyment, of merriment; and in this respect the English working man does not differ much from his fellow countrymen of what are called the middle and the upper classes, though in these a great improvement has, it must be confessed, taken place within the last half century. In fact the spread of knowledge amongst the middle and upper classes has opened to them other and better sources of enjoyment; but an English workman's state of mind is too faithfully represented by Mr. Mundella's anecdote, of the man who spoke, not for himself alone, but for, I fear, a great number of his fellow-workmen, when he made that humiliating, that disgraceful, that miserable confession,—“We can't play without it.” I think, then, that there is some call for the caution conveyed in this proverb—“Be merry and wise,” since in so many people's notions of merriment drink, and drink in excess, holds so distinguished a place, that any merry-making, any meeting for the purpose of being merry, would be like the play of Hamlet with Hamlet left out, if there were not an ample supply of intoxicating drink, with liberty to partake of it to any extent.

Thus if men, being merry, be not wise, their merriment is very apt to degenerate into intemperance. It is also apt to become extremely coarse. Setting aside the guidance of

wisdom, men will make themselves and one another merry with rude, and perhaps brutal, practical jokes, that may end in quarrelling and fighting,—or with dirty stories, which a man ought to be ashamed to have any knowledge of,—or with obscene and beastly songs, for singing which a fellow ought to be sent for three months to the tread-mill. Such stories and such songs may call forth “roars of laughter,” but it is that laughter which Solomon pronounces mad. To laugh at impurity and scoundrelism, to deride morality and seriousness, to find fun in what is indecent and profane—it is poor sport, very poor sport. “Fools make a mock at sin,” hence these roars of laughter, called forth by what would cause every man of sense and decency to cry shame.

And if men, being merry, be not wise, their merriment is likely to be very expensive. If some poor men had only the half or the quarter of what they have spent in unwise, and, for the most part, vain attempts to be merry, they would not be poor. There are many who spend as much upon their amusements, as upon their food and raiment; there are some who, in amusements, spend by far the greater part of what they earn. The merriment of a fast life, as a fast life is lived by some, brings men of large estate to bankruptcy and ruin; and you working men know well that, unless in your merriment you hearken to the voice—the guiding, moderating, warning voice—of wisdom, your merriment will bring you to poverty, and where will your merriment be then? For one pleasure you will have a thousand pains; that joy will be turned into very bitter sorrow; those “roars of laughter” will be succeeded by groans of remorse and anguish and despair, as you think what a fool you have made of yourself. Such merriment, unlimited and uncontrolled by wisdom, may cost you something more precious than money; it may cost you your health, it may cost you your character;

it may be the entire destruction of your happiness, and the total and hopeless blighting of your prospects ; it may send you to an early grave,—it may be the cause of your everlasting condemnation. Says St. Paul—“She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth ;” and there is a deathliness in a life of unconstrained and ill-conducted pleasure ; such a life is death to sobriety, death to purity, death to honour, death to decency, death to all virtue, death to happiness,—often death to the body, oftener, when persisted in, death to the soul. How sad it is, and how shameful it is, and what an instance of folly and of madness it is, that that desire for enjoyment, that capacity for enjoyment, and those means and opportunities of enjoyment, which, in the good providence of God, are intended to lighten the load of human care, and to soften the severity of the sentence—“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread”—should in such innumerable cases be perverted from their wise and beneficial purpose, and made the source of misery and the instrument of destruction. Depend upon it, if, being merry, you be not wise, you will not be merry long. The lovers of pleasure seem to confess this in their motto—“A short life and a merry one.” The merriment that cuts itself adrift from wisdom soon comes to grief.

Be merry, but by all means be wise. Be merry, and in order that you may be merry with the best merriment, with the most inexpensive merriment, with the merriment which will last longest, and with the merriment that will thoroughly well bear reflection in old age, and even in the hour of death—be wise.

For without wisdom the best merriment is beyond your reach ; without that wisdom, or that part of wisdom, which consists in the general cultivation of the mind, you will be altogether unable to understand and appreciate some of the things

that are capable of affording the greatest enjoyment that can be had in the shape of mirth. Without wisdom, without mental culture, you will or you may hear those coarse, gross, dirty stories and songs that are capable of calling forth "roars of laughter" from brutishly ignorant people, with brutish passions in their brutish hearts; but to the pure, the delicate, the exquisite, and the brilliant wit stored in literature, you will live and die a total stranger. If an ignorant man were by some strange chance to read or to hear the satire and the raillery, and the fine play upon words, the reading or hearing of which gives such extreme pleasure to well informed men, he could make nothing of them, to him there would be nothing in them. He could read the works of Thomas Fuller, and hardly find anything to provoke a smile, in pages almost every sentence of which is full of drollery; to such a man Sydney Smith would be dull and incomprehensible; he would yawn over the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*; he would miss the best things in Punch. Half the puns that are made, and more than half of the good ones, are meaningless to the wholly uneducated man, and there are boundless stores of mirth contained in stories and sayings in other languages beside our own. In fact, so far as wit, the best wit, because the most refined—so far as such wit, whether in reading or in conversation, is a source of mirth, and it is a source of very much mirth, you must be in some measure wise in order to be merry. I would say then, that if you mean to be merry with the best and purest merriment, with the merriment that delights the best and most gifted intellects, you must be wise enough to inform your minds with knowledge, so as to possess some of these stores of mirth, and to be able to appreciate them; on no other condition can you be merry, excepting with the loose, coarse, contemptible, and, for the most

part, disgusting merriment of the ignorant, the foolish, the impure, and the profane.

And I would further say—"Be merry, but by all means be wise," so that your merriment may not be expensive. I have adverted to the fact, so well known, that the being merry is often most seriously expensive, and every reasonable man must see that wisdom ought so to proportion merriment to expense "that the game shall be worth the candle." The best source of mirth, of which I have spoken, is certainly inexpensive. It costs very little in these days of cheap literature and free libraries to make one's self tolerably well acquainted with the wittiest things that have ever been said, and to obtain sufficient mental culture to understand and to enjoy them. For the dangerous and the degrading excitement of strong drink, or for admission to some so called entertainment, that consists chiefly of very poor, if not very impure means and methods of affording amusement, men pay far more than need be paid for the infinitely better mirth which wisdom so abundantly supplies. Anyhow, in whatever a man seeks to be merry, and so to forget care and to refresh himself amidst the toils and anxieties of life, let wisdom hold the purse strings, and say whether the desired enjoyment can or cannot be afforded; for that is a miserable merriment that ends in impoverishment, that excites passions, and forms habits, which make greater demands than our means will afford. It is poor merriment if, through extravagance, you are in all your pleasure-taking only making a rod for your own back. No doubt there are many things in the possession of which, or in the consumption of which, you could be very merry, but, in the name of common sense, count the cost, and be merry only in so far as wisdom, having an eye to economy, gives you her sanction. And how well it would be if all men saw that wisdom has ways of making them far more truly merry

for nothing, than without her guidance they can make themselves, whatever amount of money they spend in the attempt.

Be merry, but be also wise, in order that you may be merry long. I have no notion of any man's accepting that, to my mind, exceedingly dismal motto—"a short life and a merry one." I don't see why life should be short because it is merry, or why it should not be both merry and long. Nor do I see why, if long, the earlier part of it alone should be a period of enjoyment. No such thing. Our Creator has so wisely and kindly provided for us that, if we will observe his laws, enjoyment will be very evenly distributed over the whole course of our earthly existence. We have all known middle-aged men, yes, and old men, who were quite as cheerful and happy as any of their juniors, and in some cases far more so; but they were men who took care of themselves in their youth,—men who, when young, were more intent upon doing their duties than upon enjoying themselves in pleasures,—men who were steady, strong, industrious, painstaking, hard working,—men who did not damage either their health or their character by vice,—men who were provident and who set themselves with steadfast purpose to make their way in the world. The fact seems to be that, if, when a fellow is young, he has the good fortune to be also sensible, he is very likely to be anxious and almost unhappy, for he knows that the battle of life is before him,—he knows that in fighting life's battle many are dismally defeated,—he knows that defeat is quite possible in his own case,—he cannot think so highly of himself as to be sure of success,—he feels that he has neither time nor money to spare for self indulgence, that his very utmost efforts will be required if he is to contend successfully in the great struggle; all this he will feel, if he be sensible, and therefore his youth may not be that period of thoughtless, careless merriment which youth perhaps very commonly is; but a life begun so, with as nearly as

possible a total disregard for amusement,—with an earnestness and even an anxiousness that almost, if not altogether, debars amusement,—is the life for which, as a general rule, the greatest amount of enjoyment is in store. Such earnestness and anxiousness, with regard to the battle of life, will be a great preservative from those excesses which so often make the so-called merry life a short one. Such earnestness and such anxiousness, not to be beaten in the fight, will stimulate him to equip himself well with knowledge, which is the source of so much pleasure, as well as so much power. Above all, such earnestness and such anxiousness, resulting in success, as they generally do when the anxiety is not too great, when it is more carefulness than timidity, will bring the man—the uninjured man, the uncorrupted man, the man in the full possession of all his powers—into those conditions, material, intellectual, and social, that are most conducive to happiness. And so the life that begins with an anxiousness that may seem premature and unnatural, is, generally long before its close, a life of comfort and serenity, and the man in his old age can be merry because in his youth he has been wise. Be wise with the wisdom of prudence, with the wisdom of foresight, with the wisdom of self-restraint, with the wisdom that takes early in life an earnest, serious view of life and its struggles, and then your merriment will not be a boisterous hilarity of animal spirits, experienced in early manhood, and succeeded by years of disappointment, and depression, and sorrow. You will have gladness all your days, and ever increasing—at all events, not at all diminishing—gladness as the days roll by. Depend upon it there has been some most wretched mistake in the conduct of a man's life, if, as years advance, cheerfulness forsakes him, if all the joy and gladness of existence are exhausted in his youth. On his thirty-sixth birthday Byron wrote—

" My days are in the yellow leaf ;
 The flowers and fruits of love are gone ;
 The worm, the canker, and the grief
 Are mine alone."

He would not have written so at the age of thirty-six, he would not have written so had he lived to be twice thirty-six, if, being merry, he had also being wise. " But the foolishness of a man perverteth his way," and then " his heart fretteth against the Lord ;" and so this glorious gift of life, being in its earlier years mis-spent, perverted from its rightful purpose,—men turn round and all but curse it, call it everything that is vile, denounce it as an imposture, groan under it as an intolerable burden, speak of it as a wilderness or a vale of tears, and in effect deny the wisdom, the goodness, and the righteousness of God, in inflicting upon his creatures such a calamity as this wretched state of existence. They forget that they have made their lives what they are. Life may well be a wilderness if a man be too idle and too self-indulgent to cultivate it, but most lives that are wildernesses might have been very fruitful fields, abounding with comfort and joy.

Be merry, but be also wise, that your merriment may bear subsequent reflection. The best man perhaps cannot look back upon the past years of his life with much satisfaction, for he will see that he has done many things that he ought not to have done, and left undone many things that he ought to have done ; he will see that he has made great mistakes, wasted much time, said much that had been better left unsaid, yielded to temptations that he should have resisted,—he will, in short, see much to be sorry for and to be ashamed of. But it is terrible to look back upon a life that has been all foolishness and uselessness and sin ; it is terrible when the follies of youth furnish so much food for repentance in age.

"Of all the numerous ills that hurt our peace,
 That press the soul, or wring the mind with anguish,
 Beyond comparison, the worst are those
 That to our folly or our guilt we owe.
 In every other circumstance, the mind
 Has this to say—"It was no deed of mine;"
 But when to all the evil of misfortune,
 This sting is added—"Blame thy foolish self,"
 Or, worsen far, the pang of keen remorse—
 The torturing, gnawing consciousness of guilt—
 Of guilt, perhaps, where we've involved others;
 The young, the innocent, who fondly loved us,
 Nay, more, that very love the cause of ruin!
 Oh, burning hell! in all thy store of torments,
 There's not a keener lash!"

—Burns.

There is many a thing that may cause the anguish of remorse; some word spoken, or some blow struck, under the influence of uncontrolled anger,—some lie told, or some dishonest act committed under the pressure of a great temptation,—some piece of shameful negligence that is the cause of great suffering to others or to ourselves; but most of the remorse that so mercilessly gnaws men's hearts, is remorse that springs from ill regulated and excessive indulgence in worldly pleasures.

The best combination of mirth and wisdom that I know of is that furnished by true religion. Mirth and religion! some one may exclaim; pray what has mirth to do with religion? Religion is surely a thing so serious, so entirely serious, as to be quite exclusive of mirth. I beg your pardon. I have often in these addresses referred to the mistaken notion that religion is gloomy, and tends to make men unhappy. That notion is so common and so very firmly rooted in many people's minds, that I now refer to it again. Some good men have given religion a gloomy and repulsive aspect by giving undue prominence to those truths of religion, the contemplation of which fills the mind with

care, with sorrow, or with alarm ; but rely upon it, there is a bright side of religion, and a very bright side too. I admit that its great purpose is not to make men happy, but to make men good ; but whatever makes men good is very sure to make them happy. It is worthy of remark that in the Bible we meet with the word "joy" twice as often as with the word "sorrow," the word "hell" you may see in fifty-three instances, the word "heaven" in four hundred and seventy-five ; and for once that you read of "damnation," you read of "salvation" sixteen times. "Gladness" occurs nearly fifty times, "sadness" only once ; and I find the word "happy" in some twenty-seven passages of scripture, whereas I believe that you will look in vain, from the beginning of the Bible to the end, for the word "unhappy." Of course these facts do not tell very much, apart from an examination of the texts ; still a religion, the source of which, and the truest expression of which, are to be found in a book in which the cheerful words so greatly outnumber the mournful ones, can hardly be a very sorrowful kind of religion. But try it for yourselves ; put the matter to the test of experience ; accept, believe, obey,—live by the gospel of God's truth and love ; and never believe another word I say to you, if you do not find that the leading of such a life is the way to "Be merry and wise."

"GOD'S POOR AND THE DEVIL'S POOR."

How many senses have you?—"Five," says everybody,— "why do you ask such a stupid question?" Because, according to a German proverb, "Poverty is the sixth sense;" and I think that there is some truth in the saying. "The sixth sense" is not like the other five, which afford, on the whole, more pleasure than pain; "the sixth sense" is all pain; the loss, either total or partial, of any other of the senses every man would deplore, but it is no deprivation to be deprived entirely of "the sixth sense." Happily this sense is not so generally possessed as are the others; still most men have it, in some degree, at some period of their lives. It is no rare case for a man to have "the sixth sense" in great force early in life, and to lose it as time goes by; it is no rare case for a man to know nothing of it for a long time, and to come to it when he grows old; it is no rare case for a man to have it and lose it repeatedly during his life; and it is no rare case for a man to have more of this sense than of any other all his days.

To have a pretty keen experience of "the sixth sense" early in life can hardly be considered a misfortune. "Necessity is the mother of invention;"—"Poverty is the mother of all arts." If there had been no poor men the world would not have become so rich as it is. It is "the sixth sense" that has spurred men on and compelled them to exercise their wits. In fact "the sixth sense" has done more than anything else to

turn the other senses to good account. But "the sixth sense" is very objectionable when, after a man has lost it, he recovers it, and passes his life in losing and recovering it; it is still more objectionable when it is retained through life; it is most objectionable of all when a man who has known nothing of it in youth or middle age comes to it when he is growing old. With advancing years, some of the other senses, sight and hearing, become impaired or are altogether lost; "the sixth sense," if experienced late in life, is likely to increase in intensity as long as the man lives.

Excepting in early life, "the sixth sense" is so far a misfortune, that most people give a wide berth to the man who is afflicted by it. "He who has nothing is nothing," says the proverb. Generally men are respected in proportion as they are not troubled with "the sixth sense." "All the brethren of the poor do hate him; how much more do his friends go far from him; he pursueth them with words, but they are wanting to him." "With money," says a proverb, "you would not know yourself; without money nobody would know you." Both parts of this proverb are very true, but the latter part especially; and there is too much truth also in this old saying—"Every one likes to wipe his shoes upon poverty."

Yet "the sixth sense" may be no more of a disgrace than any of the other five, for there are God's poor as well as the Devil's. Many of the best men that ever lived have been poor, and very poor. We read on good authority of some, and they not a few, who "wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins," and "in deserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth," "being destitute, afflicted, tormented,"—"of whom the world was not worthy." One man, than whom before his birth a greater had not been born, had his "raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his meat

was locusts and wild honey ;" that man, with all his poverty, was "a burning and a shining light." One of the greatest amongst the first preachers of Christianity, on being asked by a beggar for an alms, had to say—"Silver and gold have I none ;" and it is very likely that he had not even a copper. Another of those glorious men was a working tent-maker, and he knew well what it was "to suffer need," and had many an experience of "hunger, and thirst, and cold, and nakedness." But the greatest instance of all is that afforded by the life of the Divine Founder of Christianity. Who that has ever heard can ever forget those words of His,—words uttered not in a spirit of complaint, but simply to show a certain man what he must expect if he became one of His disciples, and followed Him wherever He went :—"Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." Certainly there are God's poor, since God's own Son was one of the poorest men that ever lived. And the Bible abounds with sayings which teach us that God is no partaker of that contempt and that dislike with which most men regard the poor. Many a blessing is pronounced on the man who pities them, and many a curse upon him who oppresses them. Indeed one great object of our Saviour's coming into the world was to take up the cause of the poor, and to secure better treatment for them ;—"For He shall deliver the needy that crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper ; He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy ; He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence, and precious shall their blood be in His sight."

A good many things have to be inquired into before we have a right to say of any poor man that his poverty is a disgrace to him. It may be more to his honour than to his shame. An old proverb says—"Renounce the Devil, and thou shalt wear a

shabby coat." I don't say that this is altogether true. A man may renounce the Devil and yet wear a very good coat ; and if, renouncing the Devil, a man has to wear a shabby coat, let him, instead of renouncing the Devil, cultivate his acquaintance, and it is likely he will have to wear a coat far shabbier, for, generally speaking,—“ Rags are the Devil's livery.” Still, renouncing the Devil often does come to the wearing of a shabby coat ; but some people have far more reason to be ashamed of their fine clothes than others of their shabby ones, and—“ It is better to go to heaven in rags than to hell in embroidery.”

God's poor are those who are poor through no fault of their own. Perhaps they were born poor ; and although I would not say that “ he who is born under a three-halfpenny planet will never be worth twopence,” still he who is born poor, and very poor, is, as a rule, likely to continue so. His parents may be too poor to afford him even that small measure of education that in these times is all but essential to a man's getting on in the world ; or his parents may belong to that large and unnatural class who are too selfish and too sottish to spend anything on the education of their children ; or he may have lost his parents in his childhood, and have been thrown an orphan, and a friendless, helpless orphan, on the cold world. The poor of whom I now speak may have been born not only poor, but not over well supplied with that power of mind which even more, and much more than school education, is necessary to command success, and to enable a man to struggle out of necessitous and into comfortable circumstances. You may call a man of this sort a fool. Well, perhaps he is a fool, but it is hard to blame him for that. It is as unreasonable and as cruel to despise some people because they are fools, as it would be to despise a man because he is blind or deaf. There is a measure of intelligence

that receives worse treatment than is accorded to idiotcy and madness. Let a man have no mind at all, or no more than a quadruped has, and we pity him and provide for him ; but we have no mercy on the poor fellow who has mind enough to raise him above idiotcy, yet not enough to make him sharp and clever, and capable of making his way in the world. If a man be in mind what God chose to make him, and if he have done his best with his inferior endowments, though he be poor, he is one of God's poor, and ought as such to command some respect. Perhaps the poor of whom I now speak have been often thrown out of work for a long time by slackness of trade. Many who talk about hard times don't know much about them from practical experience. Their incomes are not lessened, or, though their incomes be lessened, they can so well afford the loss as to suffer not even the slightest inconvenience ; but they eat and drink, and dress, and enjoy themselves just as they did in the most prosperous days. At the worst some matter of luxury is dispensed with, or the use of it diminished ; a horse or a carriage is given up ; there is not quite so much wine consumed ; fewer entertainments are given ; the trip to the Highlands or to the Continent is postponed ; and, probably, first of all these retrenchments in expenditure,—subscriptions to charities are dropped. Perhaps under these circumstances people may complain of hard times, still “fat sorrow is better than lean sorrow.” But when hard times mean ravenous hunger,—when hard times mean empty pockets, empty cupboards, empty grates, and empty stomachs,—when hard times mean living on trust and going to the pawnshop with your watch, and your books, and your tools, and your Sunday clothes, and your blankets, and your bed,—when hard times mean asking parish relief or reliance upon charity,—then the times *are* hard indeed, and many an honest, steady, striving man and woman know by

experience what *such* hard times are. And sickness, too, makes people poor, and keeps them so. And considering what some poor people have to endure in the shape of privation, considering the sort of places many of them live in,—I, for one, am astonished that they continue to live at all. At great cost, rich people try to take care of their health; they have wholesome and abundant food, they are well clothed, they are never or very seldom exposed to cold and wet, they live in commodious houses, and in fresh, sweet air; on the first appearance of illness, or of anything that looks like it, they call in the best medical advice,—every comfort is provided for the sufferer, cleanliness, quiet, constant attention; and yet, after all, sickness and death cannot be mastered, even by those who have such advantages. Is it any wonder, then, if poor health should be the frequent lot of poor people? But, to the poor, sickness means more and more poverty, especially if it attack the head of the family. A poor man can't afford to lay up; to him and to his house sickness is starvation. And so when we see a man in great distress, let us not jump to the conclusion that he is an idle, wasteful, drunken, good-for-nothing fellow; he is poor, but he may be one of God's poor.

But there is another and a very different class, viz.—the Devil's poor, those who are poor by reason of their own misconduct. Some of them had capital chances of success in life. They were healthy and strong to begin with; they were born, not fools, but with mental capacities quite sufficient, if used and improved, to ensure success, or at all events to guard against want; they were sent to school, to day-school and to Sunday-school, and obtained a fair amount of education, both secular and religious; they learned what their duty was, and how they ought to do it; they were put to a good trade, and not brought up either in idleness or in such unskilled labour as

yields poor wages ; they had good friends, able and willing to advise them and to help them. Yet they are poor, miserably poor, and, for the most part, hopelessly poor. Idleness and extravagance, and in most cases drunkenness and profligacy of various kinds, have made them and keep them what they are. We say they have lost their senses, but they have gained, if gain it be, "the sixth sense" in all its keenness. Such are the Devil's poor.

And I think we need not doubt long as to which are the more numerous, God's poor or the Devil's. I believe most thoroughly, and not without good reason, that the Devil's poor are to God's poor as ten to one, or more probably a great deal more than that. Very deep poverty,—the poverty that has to go in rags and dirt,—the poverty that has to live or exist in filthy, comfortless, unhealthy houses,—the poverty that has to pay constant visits to the pawnshop,—the poverty that can't pay the rent,—the poverty that leads men to borrow, to beg, to tell lies, and to steal,—the poverty that lands men in the work-house and in the gaol,—is, in most cases, brought on by idleness, and wastefulness, and carelessness, and intemperance. God's poor, though many, are still few in comparison with the Devil's : but God's poor are seldom quite so poor as the Devil's. Amongst the things that may be urged in favour of Godliness, this is one, and I don't think it is a small or a contemptible one;—that there is really nothing like Godliness for keeping the wolf from the door ; nothing like it for filling a working-man's home with plenty and comfort ; nothing like it for giving health to the body, contentment to the mind, food to the mouth, clothes to the back. And so God's poor are not often so badly and miserably off as are the Devil's. One thing, at all events, they have which the Devil's poor have not, one thing of no small value, and that is—character. Their poverty never deprives

them of this ; their poverty often makes their character show all the brighter and the better, in the spirit in which they endure want and resist temptation : but as to the Devil's poor, character goes along with the rest, and is, indeed, usually the first thing that goes.

It is not difficult to distinguish between these two classes of poor folk. Even if they be equally poor they differ in many ways. God's poor, when work is very scarce, are generally to be seen seeking some honest employment ; or they are in their own poor homes. The Devil's poor loaf about the streets, and especially about the corners where the gin-shop stands, and almost every corner in some parts of the town is ornamented with a concern of that sort ; or they go about begging and imposing upon the public, telling all manner of stories, which, if people took the trouble to inquire, would be found to be utterly false. And so they talk most piteously of accidents that never happened, of illnesses that they never suffered, and even of wives and children who have no existence ; and if they have wives and children, they are such mean and unmanly wretches that they send them out to beg, steal, or starve. I don't say that every beggar is one of the Devil's poor, but I believe that God's poor very seldom take to begging.

God's poor are seldom seen either with dirty faces or in ragged clothes. You may often tell God's poor from the Devil's by their faces. The faces of the Devil's poor are generally very dirty, and sometimes, indeed often, have a dissipated look which reminds one of the proverb—"I can tell by your nose what sort of pottage you love." The Devil often sets his mark upon the faces of his poor,—a mark that tells, not of drink only, but of other kinds of vice, and a mark that tells of rascality, for there is often in the countenances of the Devil's *poor & cunning*, a mean, a hardened, or a ruffianly look, about

which there can be no mistake ; their faces are enough to hang them. God's poor are, at all events, free from these damning marks ; their faces may have the stamp of poverty, and of sorrow, and of anxiety, but not the brand of vice and guilt. And they are clean ; and if their clothes be shabby they are patched, and not all rags and ribbons ; and in their homes, too, there is cleanliness, and there is order, if there be nothing else. God's poor always have a decent look about them.

And God's poor are thrifty and economical to the extent of their power. They have a mortal horror of debt, accounting it not only a disadvantage, but a disgrace, and almost a sin. When they can save they save what they can, and form a very considerable proportion of the depositors in Savings' Banks. They have faith in God, but they are not such fanatics as to suppose that God will help them if they don't help themselves. They are not very often anxious, but, on the other hand, they are never careless. And so with them there is no such thing as feasting to-day at the cost of starving to-morrow. Their sobriety, for they are strictly sober, is a saving to them. They have learned something of self-denial, and wise and manly self-restraint. And so, when bad times come, they are not the first but the last of the poor to be reduced to want and distress, and a few days of frost do not see them driven to starvation. The little they have goes a long way, and goes in the right direction. As to the Devil's poor, extravagance and selfishness are the rule,—I mean the selfishness which knows nothing of self-denial, and which leads a man to spend upon his own vile appetites what he ought to spend upon the support and comfort of his family. When times are good, many of the Devil's poor live on the fat of the land, and turn up their saucy noses at food which people ten times as well off as they are glad to eat ; and so nothing is saved, for the Devil's poor have no idea that

good times are intended to help people through seasons of scarcity, that good times are the summers in which men should prepare for the winters of life.

God's poor have the comfort of a good conscience. They know that their poverty is not the result of their own follies and faults. It is with them as God has willed or permitted it to be. They have done their most and best; they have fought and are still fighting with the difficulties of their lot; they can feel some comfort in the thought that their poverty is no disgrace to them; they feel that their straitened circumstances are painful, especially since their children or their aged parents have to share it with them; still their poverty is honourable, it deserves to be respected, and it is respected by all whose respect is worth having. And God's poor have faith. Their poverty does not cause them to give up their belief that God is their Father, that he loves them, that he will provide, if not all that they desire, all that he knows to be best for them. At such confidence the infidel may sneer as he will, and imitate Job's foolish wife, who, when her husband lost all but her (she was left him to be the greatest trial of his patience), advised him to curse God and die; but the infidel, if he know anything of God's poor, ought to know that this confidence, however absurd and fanatical he thinks it, is a wonderful help and support, and makes that bearable which otherwise hardly could be borne. I am sure that I have seen many a case in which, if I had been an infidel, I should, I hope, have been very unwilling to disturb the peacefulness and hopefulness enjoyed by God's poor, and by the poorest of His poor. But the Devil's poor have no such consolation as a good conscience and a good hope afford. Their consciences angrily and bitterly accuse them, often and fiercely torment them; their folly and their sin stare them in the face; they see the well-to-do man, and can remember the

time when they might have done as well as he; their hunger is embittered by the thought that, but for their folly, they should have had bread enough and to spare. Every rag of their tattered clothes says to them—what fools you have been!

The poorest of the poor, if they be verily God's poor, are cheered by the thought that in reality they are very rich,—that there is reserved for them "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Their poverty won't last long, and will be succeeded by an eternity of the best riches. They are like those young Israelites in the desert who had the prospect of entering the promised land, and who therefore thought but little of the privations and the toils of their desert life, and feasted themselves with well founded expectations of plenty and prosperity,—when they should sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, and eat and drink to their heart's content. The Devil's poor are like those old Israelites who had no such hope, who knew that in the desert they must live, until in the desert they should die. The Devil's poor have no better world to look forward to, this world is to them bad enough, perhaps they have some fears of going to a worse. What a cruel master the Devil is! Since he has nothing good for his servants hereafter, he surely might make them comfortable and happy here. But no! he robs them of both worlds, and drags them through one hell to another.

Further, there is some encouragement to bear a hand and help God's poor. Their character commands respect, their history calls forth pity. Every man feels that if a man's poverty be not the result of his misconduct, that fact is one of the very best reasons why he should be assisted. Moreover, there is some use in befriending such people; you *can* befriend them, you *can* do them good, you *can* be certain that charity bestowed upon them is not thrown away; and so God's poor

are the poor most likely to be lifted out of their poverty. But the Devil's poor—what is the use of befriending them? Or, rather, *can* you befriend them? It won't do to give them money, for every penny of it will go in drink, and enormous is the mischief done by giving money to the Devil's poor. Get them work to do? Well, in a very short time they lose it, and with it the poor rag of character that was left to them when you took pity upon them. And you cannot trust their promises of amendment. In making these promises they may be perfectly sincere, but you know very well these promises will come to nothing. The Devil's poor are like their master, for—

“When the Devil was sick, the Devil a monk would be;
When the Devil got well, the devil a monk was he.”

Setting one of the Devil's poor on his feet is very much like setting a very drunken man on his feet,—he is no sooner up than he is down again; and he bemires himself the more, and hurts himself the more, with each successive tumble into the gutter. I know a good many of the Devil's poor whom I myself, and not I alone, but hundreds more would be very glad to help if we knew how; but with all the great and wonderful discoveries and inventions of the present age, no one has yet discovered or invented a way of helping the people who will not help themselves. We have tried and we have failed, we have thrown away our money, our advice, and our efforts, and done more harm than good. “It is a bad sack that won't stand patching;” but such sacks are most of the Devil's poor. One chance remains to them, and only one,—they must cease to be his servants, his slaves, his dupes. Even if they do this it may be very difficult to drag them out of the dirt in which they are stuck so fast; but, certainly, as long as they are the Devil's poor, their poverty admits of no remedy at all.

If you have never had any experience of “the sixth sense,” be

thankful; if in your early days you had some experience of it, which made you look about you and sharpened you up, be still more thankful; and if some of you, being still young, are at the present moment enduring some of the inconveniences which "the sixth sense" occasions, don't you take either to pining or whining. "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth." Many a young fellow loses his senses altogether in consequence of his knowing nothing of "the sixth sense;" and a tolerably distinct and memorable experience of this in early life is one of the best securities for your getting rid of it, and being all the rest of your days free from it. But however well off we may be now, poverty may be our lot some day. The reverses of fortune are so numerous and so unexpected, we are so continually hearing of men coming to grief whom we supposed to be as safe as the Bank of England, that there is surely hardly anyone who can, with entire confidence, reckon upon his escaping poverty. Even those who possess much may make mistakes that will bring them to beggary; but most certainly, men who have nothing but what they can make year by year, or week by week, through the exercise of their brains or their hands, have no security from a painful experience of "the sixth sense." But if we are to be poor, let us then be God's poor, and not the Devil's; poor through circumstances that we cannot avoid, and not through our own foolishness or our own sin. As God's poor we shall have a good conscience; as God's poor we shall have a patient spirit; as God's poor we shall suffer in very good company; as God's poor we shall make the best we can of our poverty, and not, like the Devil's poor, "throw the helve after the hatchet;" as God's poor we shall probably have some chance, perhaps many a chance, of getting out of our difficulties and prospering again. If, on the other hand, we are or should allow ourselves to become the

Devil's poor, poorer and poorer we shall become, and lower and lower we shall sink, and darker and darker our prospects will become, and there will be nothing to comfort us in our trouble, and no hope of our getting out of it. If, after a hard fight, we are beaten, and poverty is our lot, let it be honest poverty, respectable poverty, poverty of which we shall have no reason to be ashamed,—poverty which, if some be such brutes as to “wipe their shoes” upon it, others will kindly take by the hand. I began this lecture with a reference to one German proverb; I conclude it by quoting another—“If we are to be drowned, let it be in clean water.”

“MOVE ON!”

In a large and busy town, many of the streets of which are often crowded, and in all parts of which something occasionally occurs to cause an inconvenient concourse of people, to the stoppage of the thoroughfare, it is not easy for even the most quiet and orderly man at all times to avoid coming under that very necessary admonition, given by the policeman, in the two short and well-understood words—“Move on!” So far, I dare say, every one of you has, like myself, been an object of the policeman’s attentions. May that worthy and useful person never be called upon, in the exercise of his duty, to do anything more severe, more disagreeable, or more discreditable to us than gently to admonish us to mend our pace and “Move on!” But these words of the watchful and intelligent guardian of public peace and order, are words which we may, perhaps to some good purpose, address to ourselves and to one another with some far more important meaning than they have when uttered by the policeman; and if we have ears, and if we listen, we shall learn that it is not the policeman alone who says to men “Move on!” To some, Want says “Move on!”—to others, the keen competition met with in business says “Move on!”—to all, Time says “Move on!” and it is at our peril that we pay no heed to such counsellors and their stern command.

There are some things, indeed, with regard to which if it be

wise to "move on," it is wise to "move on" very cautiously and slowly; and others concerning which the best advice is—stop where you are, and don't stir another step; and others, again, in reference to which the only safe counsel is—go back as fast and as far as you can. To "move on" won't do always. There is a very old and very wise Latin maxim which, being interpreted, is—"Hasten slowly." "Move on!" but gently, take your time, don't be in a hurry; "look before you leap;" "hasty climbers have sudden falls;" "haste trips up its own heels;" "take time by the forelock;" "give time time." If some men, in their anxiety and eagerness to "move on," had borne these words well in mind, they would be better off and happier than they are. They would not have rushed into quarrels, into lawsuits, into speculations, into "great bargains," into imprudent marriages. So to some we may say "move on," but not too fast. To others, the best advice, if they are but likely to take it, is not "move on," but stand where you are. If by going further you may only fare worse, it is best to stand where you are; and if you are not pretty certain of faring better by going further, it is wise to stand where you are. When moving on means giving up a certainty for an uncertainty, be careful—"a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." And if a man is leading an extravagant and careless life, going further and further into poverty, debt, difficulty, and temptation, the right thing for him to do is to go back, to retrace his steps while it is in his power to retrace them, which it may be now, but may not be long. The maxim—"It is never too late to mend," is hardly true. I think that I have met with a good many people who had "moved on" in foolishness and in vice until they found that it was too late to mend. Of course, it depends upon the direction in which a man is going whether he ought to "move on," rapidly or slowly,—to stand still, or to go

back. But I wish now to speak of things in regard to which it is safe and wise and advantageous that we should "move on," as fast and as far as we can.

There are times in which the world seems to move on, times in which it seems to stand still, and times in which it seems to go back. Probably it is always "moving on" in regard to some things,—standing still in regard to other things,—and in regard to others, again, going back. Certainly there are some countries—Palestine, Egypt, Greece, Italy, Spain—that once were in a far more flourishing condition than that in which they are at the present day. Of such countries we may say, with truth, that "the former days were better than these." Fruitful fields have become deserts; magnificent cities have fallen into ruin; great wealth has given place to extreme poverty; instead of the freedom and the glory of ancient days, there are now only bondage and contempt. Many of the old centres of power and civilization have utterly perished; and others, such as Jerusalem, Athens, Rome, Venice, are places in all respects miserably inferior to what they were. Yet, while some places and some people have gone down, others have come up; if fruitful fields have been converted into deserts, deserts have been converted into fruitful fields; and the growth is greater than the decay; so that, on the whole, the world is "moving on" in improvement. Our own part of the world, at all events, was never in a better state than that in which we find it. With all that there is to cause dissatisfaction, and there is very much, the present is better than the past. Growling people are continually crying that the rich are growing richer, and the poor poorer. Well, the rich may be growing richer; but that the poor are poorer than they were in former times is, I think, very doubtful. On the contrary, the great bulk of the working people are better paid, better fed,

better clothed and better taught than they used to be ; and the hours of labour have been shortened, and the workman's power to command the terms on which he shall work has been greatly increased ; his political condition, also, has been greatly raised ; we all partake of the advantages resulting from scientific discovery and invention ; we all, or almost all, have it in our power to avail ourselves of the benefits derivable from the diffusion of knowledge ; many things, and desirable things, that even one generation back were luxuries enjoyed only by the rich, are now placed within the reach of all but the poorest of the poor. In regard to virtue and religion, I don't think that there has been a going back. Our condition in these respects is very far from satisfactory, but I believe it to be better than it was. When men talk of the alienation of the "masses of the people" from religion, I am inclined to ask—And pray, when were the "masses of the people" attached to religion? Did John Wesley find the "masses of the people" attached to religion? No! he found them little, if anything, better than baptized heathens. Or will you go back another hundred years, and say that the "masses of the people" were attached to religion, when Sunday was the great day for the people's sports? The "masses of the people" in this country were never more attached to religion than they are at the present time. Over the "masses of the people" religion exerts a greater and a better influence now than it did in any former period of our history. It is untruthful and ungrateful to say that for England "the former times were better than these." In the present there is much to deplore,—much ignorance, much poverty, much intemperance, much impurity, much dishonesty, much misery ; but still, so far as I know anything of England's past and England's present, when I compare this with that, I see a thousand very good reasons why I should thank God and take courage.

However, neither the progress of the world nor the progress of our country is the subject to which this lecture is intended to direct the reader's attention. It is with "Move on" as applicable to ourselves as individuals that I am concerned; whether the world or whether our country is going forward or backward, there is no reason why you and I should not "move on" in all that is wise, and useful, and good.

I would say, then, let us all try to move on in the path of knowledge. There is plenty of scope for this. It is a path along which none of us have travelled very far, and along which he who has travelled farthest may yet "move on." It is a path on which many just enter, and then come to a dead stand. Nearly two hundred years ago, the then Duke of Argyle found a poor boy who worked in his gardens reading—what do you suppose?—Sir Isaac Newton's *Principia* in Latin. His Grace was very much astonished, and asked the lad how he came to be reading such a book as that. The lad told him how he had learned to read, and added,—“One needs only to know the letters of the alphabet to learn everything else that one wishes.” And the power that is put into a person's hands, or rather into his head, once he learns to read, is immense, is inconceivably great; but how few there are who have the good sense and the perseverance to use and to improve it. Of course, most of those who can read do read something, but in many cases they read little that informs or improves their minds, very little that tends to make them either wiser or better. There may be much reading, and little or no “moving on” in the path of knowledge; the mind may be stored and crammed with trash that can do no good, and may do much mischief. Many people read, not for instruction, but for amusement; and if a book or a paper be not amusing, no matter how instructive, it is discarded. And many find their amusement

in reading what is very brutal or very dirty. There are newspapers the circulation of which, now very large, would soon become very small, if robberies, adulteries, manslaughters, and murders occupied a less space in their columns. To such papers it is not a God-send, but a Devil-send, when some great scandal or some great crime comes to light. I question very much whether, if an epistle of St. Paul or one of David's Psalms, hitherto unknown, had been just recently discovered, there would have been a hundredth part the eagerness to see it that was felt not long since in regard to certain letters by a very distinguished person, which it was expected would mix him up criminally with a very dirty and disgusting piece of business. It is very poor progress, if all the progress we make in the path of knowledge consists of a more enlarged acquaintance with profligacy. In the path of knowledge some make no progress worth speaking of, but stand still, or nearly so; others actually go back; the memory, and especially the memory that is not exercised, cannot retain much. Many things learned at school are afterwards forgotten, and the boy, if not wiser, has often far more knowledge than the man. The boy could answer questions in history, and work sums in arithmetic, which the man finds himself quite unable without fresh study to deal with. I find that this is so with myself. I think that it is likely to be so with many other persons, especially with those whose callings in life do not require them to read and learn a variety of things.

But to whatever extent we have failed of "moving on" in the path of knowledge, we have failed of securing both the power and the happiness that by this time we might have possessed; for to be ignorant is to be weak, and to be weak is generally to be miserable. And our ignorance has become a very serious matter, if, as we are often told on good authority, the

superior intelligence and skill of other nations are not only competing with us, but driving our workmen out of the field, beating them in inventiveness, and in the style and finish of manufacture. It is too late to cry out for legal protection,—the only protection possible for us is the protection that may yet be had through the better use of our wits. If our heads don't protect our hands, nothing else will. Apart from all other considerations, patriotism ought to inspire our working men with the desire and the determination to move on in the path of knowledge. I am not one of those who pay much heed to prophecies of our country's decline, yet I do not think that when threatened with invasion she was ever in so great peril of being conquered and degraded as that in which she is now placed, or soon will be placed, if her people allow other nations to excel them in intelligence. However it may have been in the barbarous times that are past, henceforth one thoroughly well-informed workman, who has brains to use and uses them well, will be of greater service than ten soldiers in sustaining the honour and the power of his country; for the contests of the future are most likely to be contests, not of arms, but of intelligence and industry,—not of the battle-field, but of the market; and the people who have most knowledge will have most power. But, not to look at the question further in this national light and on this large scale, I would fain urge our working men to make all the progress they can in the path of knowledge, for the sake of the real enjoyment such progress will afford them,—for the sake of the sensible, useful, and happy manner in which it will enable them to fill up their spare time,—for the sake of the escapes from temptation which will thus be presented to them—for the sake of the refinement of character and manners which the pursuit of knowledge is certain to impart. Let us all try to grow better

informed and wiser every day. There is room for much progress, and there are plenty of opportunities of making it. There have been times in the history of the world, in the history of our own country, when ignorance was so general, and the means of obtaining knowledge were so few and costly, that poor men could hardly be expected to move on in this direction. Such is not the case now. A poor man, in these better days, may not only get to know the letters of the alphabet, which Edward Stone said are all one needs to know in order to learn anything and everything; a poor man now, either through purchase or by the help of libraries, put freely or cheaply at his disposal, can have for reading almost any books he wishes to read. In books, and in good books, pence goes further in our days than shillings did no more than one generation back. True, there is no royal road to learning; but the path of knowledge is one in which people may move on much more cheaply than their fathers could; and it will be a monstrous shame for us, an all but unpardonable sin, if we don't avail ourselves of these glorious advantages.

It is time, too, that some of us moved on in our circumstances. I daresay that a great many people are far too anxious to get on in the world, and in their haste to be rich some work or worry themselves to death, and some give way to temptation and act dishonourably. But there are others who make no effort at all, and continue needy and get needier day by day. You may say—"It is all very fine to tell poor fellows to 'move on,' but will you, or can you, show them how to do it? A poor man has no chance, for there is but little work to do, and there are far too many hands to do it. We can't 'move on,' our way is entirely blocked up; we can hardly hold our own; it is as much as we can do, it is more *than some of us can do*, to pay our way, and keep ourselves

off the parish." No doubt there is much sad truth in this. I believe it would be a good thing for thousands of our people if they could but emigrate to countries in which the labour market is not so overstocked as at present it seems to be here. The plea—I can't "move on" in my circumstances—is in many cases perfectly true; but, though true, it is not perhaps in all cases creditable. Why can't you "move on?" Who has blocked your way? Have you, or have you not, done it yourself? Suppose now that you had saved what you have squandered! Perhaps for ten years you have, in one way and another, spent half-a-crown a week on things that you might very well have done without, and so you have lost between sixty and seventy pounds, together with the interest that might have been growing upon small weekly savings; and half-a-crown a week is not half of what some working men spend in unwise ways. How about time that has been lost during these ten years,—time that might have been spent in work? There are working men growing old who have not saved a penny, who have no prospect but the poor-house, and who know that they might now have been in possession of some hundreds of pounds. They can't "move on." No, it is very true, but they might have done so. Let such poor misguided men be a warning to others with whom it is not yet too late, who still have it in their power to form and to cultivate thrifty habits. There is a good deal of "moving on" on the part of working men, and there might be a great deal more. Begin early with the determination, if possible, not to spend all you earn. Don't despise even the smallest savings; remember that every shilling you are able to put by safely represents at least one day's food,—represents what, at a push, would keep you for one day. It is wonderful to see what poor people, and very poor people, can do in the way of saving if they will but try, if they will but make a

beginning. If they will but only put something in the Savings' Bank, to which something may be added, then they feel an interest in the art of saving, and they learn that art week by week. Now, if any one of you has saved nothing, I will venture, and I am sure I do it for his good, to ask him to do just one thing, viz., to be determined to save ten pounds; or I will put it lower, and say five pounds. Be determined to save that, at least; and you must be a poor feckless mortal if you can't contrive, in the course of time, to save that much. I don't speak of a large sum, because the idea of saving that might seem impossible. No, let us say five pounds. Just you resolve that so much, at all events, you will save; and I believe that when you have done that, you will go on to do more,—the habit will be formed, and you will "move on;" if ever so slowly, still you will "move on." I do not speak thus to encourage meanness and selfishness and greed. In fact, I believe that no man can be meaner, more selfish, or more greedy than the wretched fellow who spends his all, and comes spunging upon his friends. But what I say in advocating a rigid habit of saving, I say in the cause of independence, a condition in every respect, moral as well as physical, greatly to be desired by all. I don't say that every working man can make himself independent; but independence I believe to be within the reach of a far larger number of working men than attain to it. Let a man who has a trade in his hands, and good sense in his head; begin early to practice industrious and saving habits, and then see what the result will be. The fact is that a very large number of the well-to-do people in this country are men whose independence is the result and the reward to taking to such a sensible course betimes, and sticking to it. I don't say that what has been done by so many can be done by all; but never mind what *all* can do or cannot do, the question for you is, what can *you* do? And this question you can answer

only by trying what you can do, and giving yourself a fair trial. If there be people who can't "move on,"—well, then, they must stay where they are, or more probably they will have to go back, for generally not to save is to lose; but see to it whether "moving on" is not in your case practicable. Be industrious, be patient, be civil, be saving, above all be sober, and you will make your way, as thousands no better off and no cleverer have done before. Indeed it is not always the cleverest fellows who get on; there are no more wretched houses to be seen than those of some of our most skilful mechanics, who earn the highest wages. I am sure I grudge no man his wages; let every man get the most he can get for his work; but I know too many facts to allow me to believe that getting on—keeping out of debt, saving money, rising to independence—is altogether a question of wages. It is far more a question of economy, of the right use that is made of what a man earns, whether it be little or much.

I have another suggestion to make as to "moving on," and it is this,—that we move on, and move on in the right direction, in regard to character and habits. To "move on" out of a bad character into a good one, out of bad habits into good ones; and having so "moved on" into good character and habits, to keep "moving on" in them, never standing still, never falling back, but always improving, and becoming stronger and stronger in virtue. This is the best moving on of all. For what is it that keeps men back and keeps men down? In most cases it is something bad in character and habits. Let me repeat the truthful and striking words lately uttered by Mr. Bright:—"If we could subtract from the ignorance and poverty, and sickness and suffering and crime now witnessed amongst us, the ignorance and poverty, the sickness and suffering and crime occasioned by the single vice of drinking, the country would be,

so changed for the better that we should hardly know it again." Yes, "if we could but subtract;" and why should we not? There are causes of suffering which perhaps we cannot remove, but this, and some others, such as dishonesty and impurity, are causes of suffering, such as every man may, if he will, entirely escape. We have had a good deal of political reform, a good deal also of fiscal reform; what is wanted now is an equal or greater proportion of personal reform. For want of this the advantages of wise legislation, and the benefits resulting from the progress of science, are, to the great bulk of our people, almost of no service. There are glorious things before us if we will but seek them and strive after them—each man for himself. He moves on who is wiser to-day than he was yesterday; and he moves on who is richer to-day than he was yesterday; but the man who moves on to most purpose is he who each day becomes a better man,—more pure in heart, more powerful to resist temptation, more patient under adversity, more charitable in spirit, speech, and conduct. "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience Godliness, and to Godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity;" that is the way to move on. They call this an age of progress! would to God we could see more than we do of progress in this direction! They call this an age of progress, and they point to steam-engines and railways, and telegraphs, and the penny postage, and a cheap press—all excellent things! but I must confess that I am rather chary of this phrase. "The age of progress!" I am almost ashamed to use it, when I know that of progress in what is best, of progress in what is most useful to man and most acceptable to God, *there is so very little*. I don't say there is none; but there is

far too little to allow one to think of the age he lives in with comfort and satisfaction. If we could point not only to such advancements on former times as I have mentioned, but also to a great diminution of crime,—to a great increase of sobriety, and purity, and honesty, and kindness,—to a people distinguished by virtue and Godliness, “the age of progress” would be an expression that we could use without any disagreeable feeling that it is only half true, and that in regard to matters of the highest importance to our welfare it is indeed all but utterly false. The age that is not very distinctly and decidedly an age of progress in goodness, hardly deserves to be called “an age of progress.”

One word more. While “moving on” is in some respects a matter that depends upon ourselves, and we may say that we will “move on,” or that we won’t, there is one sense in which we do “move on,” and must “move on,” whether we will or not. We do “move on,” and must “move on,” from childhood to youth, from youth to manhood, from manhood to old age; though most of us indeed never reach this last condition, but are moved off the stage of life at some far earlier period. Time is a policeman that not only orders but compels us all to “move on;” and as though time did not hurry us forward fast enough to the grave, there are many who don’t wait for his command, but anticipate it, and rush forward to early death. However, “move on” we must,—the inexorable law of mortality spares none. And this being so, is it not sensible for every one of us to ask himself—Whitherward am I “moving on?” Perhaps some one says “I am ‘moving on’ to annihilation, to an eternal sleep.” That is surely a dismal prospect. “Not half so dismal,” rejoins my friend, “as that which you preachers are in the habit of holding out to poor miserable mortals, terrifying them with hell-fire and eternal torment.” Well, perhaps too much

has been said about these things,—more than the Bible, rightly understood and interpreted, justifies. The Bible tells us of a judgment to come, in which all men will be dealt with according to their deeds; and there surely is nothing unreasonable, or unfair, or unlikely in that. Much more unreasonable, and unfair, and unlikely I think, that men unpunished in this world, though guilty of the foulest crimes, should never be held answerable for their conduct. But we preachers have something else to speak of—we have glory, honour, immortality, eternal life to speak of; these things, promised to those who believe in God, these things provided for us through Jesus Christ, are surely better than your eternal sleep,—your return like a beast to the nothingness from which you came. Anyhow, let the Sceptic take what comfort he can from the expectation of his ceasing to exist—we can derive a great deal more comfort from the hope of continuing for ever to exist in the presence and the glory of our Heavenly Father. To that life let us be “moving on.” You call this preaching—you may call it what you like. It is what I believe, what I rejoice to believe, what for your good I wish you to believe; and if you don’t believe it, if you think it superstition, let us, if you please, go back to what you know to be a stubborn fact—you are “moving on;”—ask yourself this plain, practical, important question—“Whitherward?”

“PLUCK.”

Certainly this word “Pluck” is not very elegant, but it is, as commonly used, very expressive. It is not very elegant, because, strictly speaking, it means the heart, liver, and lights, *plucked* from the carcase of a sheep or a calf; yet it is very expressive, because it is just another word for courage; and I suppose it has acquired this meaning because the heart is a principal part of the pluck, and the heart is, in many languages, the symbol of courage. Not that courage is the idea most commonly suggested or intended when the word *heart* is used metaphorically, for it more usually signifies love, of which we have a very familiar instance in the word “sweetheart,” but courage is often denoted by the word “heart;” and so we have such words as “lion-hearted” to signify great courage, and “chicken-hearted” to signify very small courage; to hearten is to encourage, to dishearten is to discourage; to take heart is to take courage, to be faint-hearted is to be destitute of courage. John Bunyan, in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, has one character who is a total stranger to fear, and he gives him the name of “Great Heart.” And instead of the word “Pluck,” I might use the word “Heart” as the title of this address, were it not that this word has such a great breadth of meaning, inclusive

of much more than courage. "Pluck" suits my purpose better, and I will risk the charge of using what may be considered a vulgar word, a slang term. I don't think that many can condemn me for using it without condemning themselves, for it is a word that seems to be used very frequently by most people; and I need scarcely say that this Lecture is not intended for such fastidious and squeamish persons as would be shocked by such a word as "Pluck."

It may be very well at the outset to draw a distinction between "Pluck" and "Cheek." They are not the same thing. "Pluck" is courage, "Cheek" is impudence,—hard-faced, unblushing impudence. A "plucky" fellow deserves our admiration, a "cheeky" fellow deserves to be kicked. But "Cheek" may sometimes be mistaken for "Pluck," or perhaps "Pluck" may take such ways of showing itself as ally it very closely with "Cheek." Now one may be "plucky" without being "cheeky," courageous without being impudent. Many of the men who have most "Pluck" have very little "Cheek," and many of the men who have most "Cheek," when put to the proof, are found to have very little "Pluck." Your "cheeky" fellow is "plucky" only as long as he considers himself tolerably safe. The "cheeky" man certainly has courage of a sort, as when, on a very slight acquaintance, he invites himself to your house, or asks for the loan of a sovereign. He has the courage to do things that a really "plucky" man would almost rather be shot than do. He has no self-respect, he has no respect for others; he is altogether a very contemptible and abominable person. The really "plucky" man respects both himself and others. He is modest—he is, in regard to many things, even timid; he has not the courage to go often uninvited into his neighbour's house; he has not the courage to beg—it is terribly hard work for him to muster courage even

to borrow ; he has not the courage to degrade himself ; he has only the courage that never borders upon impudence—the courage of the lion, not that of the cur. Let us remember this well—"Cheek" is not "Pluck !"

Pluck is shown in the courage that faces danger. There are gymnastic exercises and other sports that tend to make men "plucky," and do as much good to the mind as to the body, giving heart as well as health, and strengthening not the muscles only, but also the nerves. Without being foolhardy in his amusements, a man may cultivate a very useful kind of "Pluck," in trying to excel in a variety of manly sports ; he will be all the better fitted to encounter the manifold difficulties of life, if he have a good share of the physical courage which such sports are calculated to inspire ; and during life, many things may turn up in regard to which duty to ourselves or to our neighbour may make great demands upon courage of this kind. By such courage—strengthened, if not created through physical exercises—a man may save his own life and the lives of others. The celebrated engineer, John Metcalf of Knaresborough, was blind from his infancy ; but, blind as he was, he had the "Pluck" to become a bold swimmer, and having such "Pluck," he was able on one occasion to save three of his young companions from drowning. So many accidents of all sorts are perpetually occurring,—accidents in which "Pluck" is so greatly required, and is able to do such great things,—that, in the interest of humanity, it were well that all men, and all women too, should have as much as possible of the "Pluck" that faces danger. Such "Pluck," it is true, sometimes shows itself in ways that I for one cannot admire—in pugilism, for example. Demoralising and brutalising as pugilism is, one cannot deny the "Pluck" that it generally displays, although it is of such a decidedly dog-like character. And perhaps this

kind of "Pluck" must be held in part accountable for most of the wars that have disgraced and desolated the world. But "Pluck," if not of a high order, yet in great degree, has of course been shown, and shown by most nations, from the earliest times in military operations.—

"Half a league, half a league,
 Half a league onward ;
 All in the Valley of Death
 Rode the Six Hundred.
 "Forward the Light Brigade !
 Charge for the guns !" he said—
 Into the Valley of Death
 Rode the Six Hundred.
 * * * * *
 Cannon to right of them,
 Cannon to left of them,
 Cannon in front of them
 Volleyed and thundered ;
 Stormed at with shot and shell,
 Boldly they rode and well,
 Into the jaws of Death,—
 Into the mouth of Hell
 Rode the Six Hundred."

Friend of peace as I am,—convinced of the folly, barbarity, and wickedness of war as I am,—I must of course say that there was "Pluck" there, the "Pluck" that faces danger and all but certain death, without dismay, without murmuring, and without hesitation. The pity is that such "Pluck" should have been so often employed in the dreadful art of war, and that history should be so largely made up of events in which "Pluck" has been called forth only to injure and to destroy. But the "Pluck" that faces danger shows itself in other and better ways. It shows itself in our seamen, as they often battle with tremendous storms, and sometimes encounter the horrors

of shipwreck. It shows itself in our life-boatmen, who imperil their own lives in endeavouring to save the lives of others. It shows itself in the intrepidity of travellers. I should think that, if he be yet alive (which God grant) there is not a pluckier man in all the world than Dr. Livingstone. I do not think that greater "Pluck" was shown by the "six hundred"—when, in obedience to commands which they were compelled to obey, they rode "into the valley of death,"—than has been shown for many years by that one man, as, protected by no military force, and entirely of his own accord, he has, in the interests of science and civilization, travelled over Africa,—encountering its wild beasts and its wilder men, and exposing himself to ten thousand privations and dangers.

But with very great respect for the "Pluck" that faces danger, especially when it does so in the prosecution of a peaceful calling, in the pursuit of knowledge, and in the relief of suffering, it is not the highest kind of "Pluck," nor is it that kind of "Pluck" which we are most frequently called upon to exercise. In a civilized country, where we have the protection of the law, a man may spend a long and active life without being even once required to summon his "Pluck" for the defence of himself or of anybody else from violence. In such a country there is no need to carry swords or revolvers; we are all of us a great deal safer without such things;—it is only a barbarous or at best a half-civilized country where the practice of carrying weapons prevails. And the occasions on which the "Pluck" that faces danger is useful to save ourselves, or to rescue others from the perils involved in accidents, though numerous in the aggregate, are, as a rule, very rare in each man's own case. As to the "Pluck" that enables a man to face danger, excellent as it is, it is seldom greatly needed in ordinary life. For my own part, I do not know that, since the broils and

battles of my school days, I have been half a dozen times in circumstances that have called for the "Pluck" of physical courage; and I am not sorry for it. The "noble art of self-defence" is an art of which I never knew much; it is, at all events, an art which I have not been required to exercise. If a man has only that small measure of common sense that will keep him out of quarrels, and teach him to be fairly civil, he is master of an art of self-defence that will be of far more service to him than any amount of "Pluck" and skill in the use of fists, knives, life-preservers, or pistols. The best art of self-defence is to behave yourself always and to all persons like a sensible man. A moderately wise head is worth a great deal more than two very strong hands as a means of self-defence. Rely upon it, "wisdom is better than weapons of war." The "Pluck" that faces danger is of use only in so far as danger has to be met, and I hope that we shall have enough of it to serve us whenever occasion for it may arise; but the exercise of a little good sense will make the occurrence of danger, of such danger—danger of bodily harm—very rare; and the "Pluck" that faces danger is hardly so well worth cultivating as the good sense that has such power to avoid it.

But there is "Pluck" of another sort, and of a sort more needed by most of us. Long enough has the world rung and resounded with the praise of physical courage, until indeed all valour and all heroism have, in the language and the thoughts of most people, been summed up in the one word—war; but let us think a little of moral courage—its nature, its worth, and the many occasions on which it is called for as we pass on through life,

There is the "Pluck" that dares to speak the truth, and this, unlike the "Pluck" that faces danger, is a sort of "Pluck" which your duties and mine often call upon us to exercise.

It is very likely that most of us have been cowards, have often been cowards, in regard to this matter. For the speaking of the truth sometimes gives great offence to people who have it in their power to injure us; and the speaking of the truth sometimes involves confessions that are to ourselves very unpleasant, discreditable, and humiliating. If you have wronged a man, and you can keep the wrong quiet and unknown, and, by means of a few stout, hard-faced lies, throw off suspicion, —and the confession of the wrong would bring disgrace, would cost you your situation, would perhaps expose you to prosecution,—it requires no small degree of courage to “tell the truth and shame the devil.” But I do not think that we have a right to consider ourselves “plucky” unless we are prepared to tell the truth whenever our conscience requires us to do so, and whatever be the offence we give, or the humiliation, the disgrace, the punishment we bring upon ourselves.

And there is the “Pluck” that dares to do right, to adhere to principle, to act upon conviction. In such “Pluck” many of us are sadly deficient. Young men who would quickly and almost fiercely resent any reflection upon their physical courage, don’t seem to feel how much more disgraceful is that lack of moral courage through which it so often comes to pass that they are more afraid of doing right than of doing wrong, more afraid of virtue than of vice, more afraid of being considered strictly moral than of being known to be loose and impure. Great is the power of ridicule to frighten young men out of good principles and good habits. Now I call it a “plucky” thing when a young man has the courage and the strength to stand that ridicule; to continue a Sabbath-observer, though day by day in the company of Sabbath-breakers; to maintain perfect sobriety amongst those who think it manly to drink; to keep himself pure in speech and in behaviour, though

those with whom he has to associate in business laugh at all such purity ; to be most scrupulous in all his conduct, though others think him and call him a sanctimonious hypocrite ; to be a servant of God amongst those who serve the world, the flesh, and the devil. That is "Pluck ;" and those who most deride it know that it is "Pluck." They know that there is no courage in doing what so many others do, no courage in going with the stream, no courage in following a multitude to do evil, no courage in howling with the wolves, and barking with the dogs ; but they know that there is some courage—more courage than they can muster—in being singular, in enduring contempt, in returning good for evil, and in venturing, gently, but firmly and fearlessly, to reprove and to warn those who are doing evil, and to entreat them to alter and reform their ways. The scorers have reason to say, and in their hearts they do say—"This man, who dares to do what he believes to be right—he is the 'plucky' fellow, and we are the cowards."

And there is the "Pluck" that gives a man courage to appear what he is, to live according to his means. Such a man is afraid of debt, and the man who is not afraid of debt is not "plucky," but "cheeky ;" not "plucky," for he generally runs into debt through being most dreadfully afraid of being considered poor. He has the "Cheek" to run into debt for good clothes, because he has not the "Pluck" to wear shabby ones. Your truly "plucky" man is afraid of debt, because debt means dependence, and there is no "Pluck" worth speaking of where there is not a proud, stern spirit of independence. And so he is afraid of debt, but he is not afraid of what people may think and say of him when they observe in how poor a house he lives, and what a worn-out hat he carries on his head. For what people think and say of him, as long as he does his duty and owes no man anything, he has a considerable measure of

very wholesome contempt. We must not outrage society, and yet we need not be its slaves; if we intend to be courageous, we must set many of its ways and its opinions at defiance. No one deserves to be considered "plucky" who has not the "Pluck" to resist the tyranny of fashion, when it would lead him into the dishonesty of living upon false appearances. A little more "Pluck" of this sort would be of great service to many working people, especially amongst the wives and daughters of working people, who are sorely tempted, by very false notions of respectability, to incur expenses greater than a working man's means will bear. We are told that many poor people will not go to places of worship because they can't dress as well as the people who generally go to church and chapel. For my own part, I don't think that this objection to going to public worship prevails very widely, but I would say that, in so far as it does prevail, it shows a want of "Pluck." He whom we worship has no more respect unto the man "with a gold ring and in goodly apparel," than unto the "poor man in vile raiment." "No," you say, "but you parsons are not so impartial, you pay a great deal more attention to the well-dressed folk than to us poor people." My friends, have you tried whether this is so or not? I hope it is not my own case; and this I will say, that although I have a pretty large acquaintance with "parsons" of all sorts of denominations, I don't know a man amongst them that is such a truckling snob as to treat the richer people with greater respect than that which he shows to the poor. Some, in my opinion, sympathising too much with poor people's feelings of shame in regard to appearing amongst the well-dressed folk, are in favour of "Ragged Churches," churches for the men and women in "vile raiment." I don't think well of such ways of treating our poorer brethren and sisters. No! let the rich and the poor meet together in the presence of the Lord who is the

Maker of them all. I should be very sorry to encourage rags, but finery is, perhaps, almost as bad as rags; it leads people into debt, it often tempts to crime; and therefore I wish, and I think that I have reason to wish, that there were more of that "Pluck" which enables a man to resist the intolerable slavery of fashion, and in dress and everything else to make an appearance that accords with his means. Let us not be so foolish as to make ourselves unhappy by allowing the world to dictate to us how we shall live; let each of us boldly live as he finds he can afford to live. I don't admire the poverty that clothes a man in "vile raiment," but, provided that poverty is honest poverty, I do admire the "Pluck" which enables a man to wear the "vile raiment" without the slightest loss of self-respect, and with the utmost indifference to what people may think or say.

There is also the "Pluck" that dares to encounter difficulties and misfortunes. These things drive men who have not "Pluck" of this sort to despair, perhaps to hard drinking, perhaps to suicide. And when all things are or seem to be against a man, when his hopes are destroyed, when he finds that he has laboured in vain and spent his strength for nought, it does need a great amount of "Pluck" to turn to and fight the battle of life over again. But such "Pluck" is sometimes, is often seen. There is a well authenticated story of a young man who had a large property, but who ran through it all,—squandered every penny of it in folly and vice. He determined to put an end to his life, and on his way to carry out his desperate purpose, sat down on a hill which commanded a view of the estates that had been his. He changed his mind, he would neither drown himself nor blow his brains out; he would recover all that property or die in the attempt. He went back, saw in the street a load of coals lying on the pavement in front of a house; he asked for the job of carrying in

the coals, and he got it; he earned a few pence, and he laid them by; he engaged in hard work as a labourer, for he had been brought up a gentleman, and knew nothing of a trade. He saved by little and little, until he was able to buy a few cattle, which he sold to advantage; and so he went on, living very sparingly, until he recovered all the lands that he had lost, and became possessed of far more than he had in his youth. It is true that in the end he died a miser, for he had given himself up so entirely to the one object of money making; still it was an extraordinary instance of the "Pluck" that encounters and vanquishes difficulties and misfortunes such as would drive most men to despair. I could give better instances, I could speak of men who, in spite of all manner of difficulties and disadvantages, did better things than that which the man I have referred to did. The patience that has so often been displayed by authors, by artists, by inventors—the manner in which many such men have endured poverty, and ridicule, and repeated failure—these show us what "Pluck" is. In almost everything the "plucky" men are the men who succeed. If it had not been for "Pluck," and great "Pluck," most of the inventions that are of such immeasurable benefit to the world, would have died with their inventors,—would have been ideas in their minds, or experiments in their studies and workshops, and nothing more. We are almost as much indebted to James Watt's "Pluck" as to his ingenuity for the steam-engine. The clever head would often have contrived in vain, but for the courageous heart; and indeed it is very possible that many a valuable idea has been lost to the world, through want of courage to persist doggedly in putting it forward. In fighting the battle of life, health is much, and brains are much, and friends are much, and favourable circumstances are much, but more than all is "Pluck."

Certainly, the "Pluck" that fights with difficulty may be carried to an unwise extreme. The difficulty may be altogether unconquerable, and then it is a pity to see so much "Pluck" wasted upon it, as has been the case with so many men who have worn out their lives and spent their fortunes upon efforts to discover Perpetual Motion. And the difficulty, though not unconquerable, may be scarcely worth the labour bestowed upon it, and the suffering endured for its sake, as I think has been the case in regard to the North-West Passage, of which perhaps we may say that the game has hardly been worth the candle. Many a useless enterprise has been undertaken with a zeal worthy of a better or more practical cause. And therefore "Pluck" needs the guidance of good sense, otherwise a man may, greatly to his own damage, spend his "Pluck" in knocking his head against a stone wall. However great "Pluck" a man has for encountering difficulties, it will be well for him to consider very carefully whether that to which his "Pluck" inclines him is practicable; and if practicable, serviceable. "Pluck" is only fool-hardiness or stupidity if it do not consult good sense in regard to what it undertakes. To say nothing of impossibilities, "Pluck" ought not to be blind even to difficulties, so as either to deny their existence or to under-measure their magnitude. "Pluck" must take care not to get intoxicated with success, otherwise, having achieved something great, it may tempt a man to undertake something that will not only baffle him, but ruin him. In many a case failure is the result of success; according to the proverb—"Much would have more, and lost all;" and so the "Pluck" that makes a fortune, waxing over ambitious and over confident, loses it. Nevertheless, when kept within the bounds of reason and moderation, "Pluck" is one of the most important elements of all success.

As a general rule, the better a man is, the "pluckier" he is in all such "Pluck" as is worthy of culture and admiration. "The best hearts, Trim, are ever the bravest," replied my uncle Toby. That many bad men are beyond all question courageous, I don't deny; but I think none are so truly courageous as truly good men. "The righteous are bold as a lion." Of the "Pluck" that faces suffering, danger, and death, the noblest instances are to be found amongst thoroughly earnest, religious men. Though, for my own part, I think fighting, under almost all circumstances, an unchristian business,—still I will not deny the Godliness, and no one can deny the fighting "Pluck" of the men who formed a large proportion of Cromwell's army. But the "Pluck" that fights is far inferior to the "Pluck" that is prepared to suffer rather than prove faithless to principle and to conviction. Of all armies the most courageous that has ever been seen is "the noble army of martyrs," consisting not of men only, but of men, women, and children, whom the prospect of sufferings far greater than those of death on the field of battle could not terrify, and whom the endurance of such sufferings could not subdue. Of courage, whether physical or moral, or both combined, some of the most splendid instances are to be found in the best of the men of whom we read in the Bible. Think of the shepherd boy, David, in his encounter with the armed giant Goliath; of Daniel, choosing to be cast into the den of lions rather than be unfaithful to his sense of religious duty; of John the Baptist, courageously reproving Herod for his wickedness; of St. Paul, who, knowing that bonds and afflictions abided him, said, and by his conduct proved that what he said was no vain-glorious boast—"None of these things move me." Rely upon it, it is the fear of God that drives away the fear of man, the fear of suffering, the fear of death, the fear of hell, the fear of everything that

men are commonly most afraid of. Well worth pondering are those words of Solomon, pointing out as they do the source of the truest and highest courage—"In the fear of the Lord is strong confidence."

